A

REPLY

TO

Mr. *EDWARDS*'s

Brief REFLECTIONS

ON

A Short Diſcourſe of *the True Knowledg of Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.

To which is prefixed

A PREFACE,

Wherein ſomething is ſaid concerning *Reaſon* and *Antiquity*, in the chief Controverſies with the Socinians.

By *S. Bold*, Rector of *Steeple*, *Dorſet*.

One is your Maſter, even Chriſt, Mat. 23. 10.

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XVII. 53.P

THE PREFACE to the Reader.

I *Have been preaching a conſiderable time on the* Epiſtle of St. *Paul* to the Philippians, *and coming to the* 8th Verſe of the third Chapter *of that* Epiſtle, *I preached the Sermon on which Mr.* Edwards *hath beſtowed his Reflections. I had not any Thoughts of making that Sermon more publick than the other Sermons I had preached on that Epiſtle, till I afterwards found the* Propoſition *laid down in that Sermon, moſt unmercifully traduced by Mr.* Edwards *in his Books writ againſt* the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, *&c. The Sermon was publiſhed, becauſe I thought it did plainly manifeſt that the Propoſition did not impair any of the Doctrines taught in the New Teſtament, but did aſſert and ſecure to them all, their Authority, did preſerve them in the Places where Chriſt had ſet them, and for the Uſes for which he intended them. The Animadverſions were deſigned to intimate that Mr.* Edwards *had miſtaken, or miſrepreſented the Propoſition, and to hint that in certain Reſpects the Conſiderations Mr.* Edwards *had offered againſt the Propoſition were deficient. But Mr.* Edwards *hath fancied other things, and therefore puts a different Conſtruction on them both.*

I *ſhould be inclined to think it ſomething* ſtrange *that the* Propoſition *diſcourſed of in the following Papers (the Truth of which Propoſition the moſt Ingenious Author of* the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, *&c. hath ſo fully proved from the Teſtimony of Chriſt and his Apoſtles) ſhould be ſo* coarſely *treated, but that I am very well ſatisfied that there is no great Cauſe to*

wonder, *that even learned and good Men do differ in their* Apprehenſions *about Matters of no* ſmall Moment, *and that neither Learning, nor Piety, no nor both together, are always ſtrong enough in this* imperfect Eſtate, *to reſtrain the* Fondneſs *Men have for* Notions *they have a great while eſpouſed, from expreſſing it ſelf in its* Natural Dialect. *The Primitive Chriſtians had a more* honourable Eſteem *of* this Propoſition, *when they thought it of much* greater Conſequence *than their* Lives. *The Chriſtians were at firſt* perſecuted, *not ſo much for any particular Doctrines they profeſſed to believe, but for* Jeſus's Name ſake, *that is, for their owning* Jeſus to be the Meſſias. *And afterwards, when the Chriſtians were murdered with a more immediate Reſpect to particular Doctrines they would not renounce, becauſe they knew* Jeſus, *whom they believed to be the* Meſſias, *had taught them, or would not embrace Doctrines for which there was no Proof that Chriſt ever taught them, it was the* Reſpect *they had to* Jeſus as the Meſſias, *that did* dignify *their* Sufferings, *and advance them to the* Crown of Martyrdom. *The great Point of* Anti-Chriſtianiſm *(at leaſt next to a profeſſed diſowning Jeſus to be the Meſſias) conſiſts in ſetting up an* Authority *to make any thing* a part of Religion, *which Jeſus Chriſt hath not* authorized. *And the great* Malignity *of* that *lies in this, that it involves a* tacit denying *that* Jeſus is the Meſſias.

Thoſe who are of the Opinion, that true Chriſtians are obliged to endeavour to encreaſe extenſively *in Knowledg and Faith, and yet think that the Belief of more Articles than this,* that Jeſus is the Meſſias, *is indiſpenſably neceſſary to* make *or* conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, *may (if they conſider Matters well) perceive that the Notion of the* Abſolute Neceſſity *of the Belief of* more Articles *to make a Man a* Chri-

Chriſtian, will prove in its juſt Conſequences very injurious *to Chriſt's* Authority. *For thoſe things, the Belief whereof doth conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, muſt be the Rule and Meaſure by which he is to judg and determine what he is to endeavour to know and believe. So that whatever he can be obliged to endeavour to know and believe, by virtue of his being a Chriſtian, muſt have a* clear *and* plain Connection *with* every one of thoſe Articles, *which are abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to make him a Chriſtian. Its having ever ſo plain and immediate a Connection with one, or two, or more of thoſe Articles, will not prove he is obliged to believe it, if there be yet more Articles, the Belief of which was neceſſary to make him a Chriſtian; becauſe it anſwers not, or comes not up to that entire Rule, by which he is to judg, whether he be obliged to believe it. For in that caſe it falls as really ſhort of anſwering the* Rule *by which he is to proceed, as a Perſon's judging that a due believing that Jeſus is the Meſſias, makes a Man a Chriſtian, falls ſhort of the Truth, if the Belief of more Articles is indiſpenſably neceſſary to make him a Chriſtian. Thus his knowing that Jeſus Chriſt hath revealed ſuch a* Doctrine, *brings him not under an* Obligation *to believe it, but he may notwithſtanding that with-hold his Aſſent. If it ſhall be ſaid, that knowing Chriſt hath revealed it, he is by virtue thereof obliged to believe it with reſpect to the end for which it is revealed: I anſwer, that if a due Belief that Jeſus is the Meſſias do not conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, a Chriſtian is to judg* by all that which is neceſſarily to be believed to conſtitute him a Chriſtian, *of his being obliged to believe* any Point *to any* Purpoſe in Religion; *for what is* neceſſary *for any Purpoſe* in Religion, concerns *him as he is a* Chriſtian, *and ſo is not to be judged of by what* doth not conſtitute *him a* Chri-

ſtian, *but by what doth conſtitute him a* Chriſtian, *be that the Belief of* more *or* fewer Articles.

Mr. Edwards *hath thought fit to reproach the Propoſition I ſpeak of as a* Socinian Doctrine, and a way to extirpate the Chriſtian Religion out of the World, and to introduce Infidelity. *But I think it is the* only Point *that can with full Aſſurance be advanced and inſiſted on effectually, and with the greateſt Eaſe and Speed, to proſtrate the* Oppoſers *of* Chriſt's Divinity, *and of* the Doctrine of the ever bleſſed Trinity, *and to overthrow all the* falſe *and* corrupt Notions *which* disfigure *the* Chriſtian Church, *yea which do prevail in the* World. *The Doctrines or Articles which Chriſtians are to endeavour to underſtand and believe, are thoſe which are delivered in the* New Teſtament. *And the Reaſon why they are to believe the Doctrines which are taught* there, *is the* Authority *of Jeſus, conſidered as the* Meſſias. *Whoever believes that Jeſus is the Meſſias, muſt aſſent to the Truth of every Propoſition he knows that Jeſus hath taught; for his* Teſtimony *is the Great* Evidence *of the Truth of thoſe* Propoſitions. *If any Man pretends to believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias, and yet will reject or refuſe to believe what he knows he hath taught, he doth thereby manifeſt that he is not a* true Chriſtian, i. e. *that he doth not indeed believe* that Jeſus is the Meſſias. *Thoſe who ſay they would not believe ſuch or ſuch a Doctrine, if it were expreſly taught in the* New Teſtament, *do plainly declare they do not own* thoſe Books *to be* divinely inſpired. *And if they ſhould ſay they would not believe them, if Jeſus Chriſt himſelf did deliver them, they would more immediately declare that they do not believe him to be the Meſſias. The* Ebionites, *who out of Deſign pretended to believe Jeſus to be the Meſſias, were ſo ſenſible of this, that becauſe they would*

would not acknowledg him to be God, they rejected the Books of the New Teſtament, and provided themſelves another Book (which had not that Doctrine in it) which they pretended did contain the Doctrines which he taught.

It hath been the way of thoſe who have ſet themſelves againſt the Holy Scriptures, or ſome of the Doctrines taught in them, either to advance ſome Doctrines as neceſſary to be believed, which are not taught in thoſe ſacred Writings, or to alter ſome of the Doctrines taught in them, by annexing their own Senſe and Interpretation to the Words in which Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles delivered them. Of this latter ſort were thoſe who oppoſed the Divinity of Chriſt, and the Doctrine of the Trinity, which occaſioned the Primitive Chriſtians to make it their Buſineſs to ſhew that the Words which Chriſt and his Apoſtles uſed did import a great deal more than what thoſe Perſons pretended was the full Senſe of them. Thoſe falſe Teachers, and their Succeſſors, eſpecially thoſe who have of late contended againſt theſe Doctrines, applied themſelves to an Artifice very common amongſt them who have ſet up to combate the Doctrines of our Bleſſed Saviour, and undermine the Chriſtian Religion, which is, to endeavour to enlarge the Controverſy as much as poſſible, that thus they might have the more room to turn in. They have by this Means obtained certain unhappy Advantages. They have amuſed and bewildered many of the weaker ſort of People. They have found out many Evaſions and Shifts under which to hide and ſhelter themſelves. They have created Perſons of prodigious Learning and Parts much unneceſſary Trouble. Whereas had they been kept ſtrictly to this one Point, that Jeſus is the Meſſias, and not ſuffered to ſtart from that and its immediate Conſequence, the Controverſy would

have been brought to a ſpeedy Iſſue, *by producing the Meſſias's own Words. For then the utmoſt they could do would be only to talk of* Accents, Articles, *and* Copies, *which I conceive are Topicks they do not much care now to inſiſt on; and amongſt other Reaſons, (beſides their having been ſo often baffled already) becauſe very few Perſons (in compariſon) would regard the Debate, when thoſe things would be all they could diſcourſe of. But they have exceedingly extended the Controverſy, by prevailing with the* Orthodox *to fix on other Topicks for Diſcourſe. They have greatly indangered the* Truth, *under a* Pretence *of being* reven ged *on thoſe* Terms *the Antient Chriſtians had ſettled for the expreſſing of* their Senſe *concerning theſe Doctrines, in oppoſition to thoſe who formerly ſet themſelves againſt theſe Doctrines. And thus the Controverſy is run into* Antiquity and Reaſon. *By which means the Socinians and the Orthodox have had opportunity to produce very great Proofs of the Strength of their* Natural Endowments, *and their* acquired Accompliſhments. *Upon theſe Points we have had* of late *very notable Encounters. The Orthodox have (all things conſidered) acquitted themſelves bravely, and with ſingular Dexterity (except ſome of them falling together by the Ears one with another, that their Adverſaries might have ſome breathing Space, and a little Diverſion to boot) but I am apt to ſuſpect that the great Reaſon why they have done ſo little* Execution, *is becauſe they have yielded, for a while, to lay aſide* the Sword of the Spirit, the Teſtimony of the Meſſias, *and have conſented to fight their Adverſaries at their* own Weapons. *Did I enjoy my former Health, I ſhould think it a very* pleaſant Diverſion *to ſee* Prizes *plaid this way by Perſons who are well-skill'd at theſe ſort of Weapons, provided the* Matters *in Debate were of* another Nature. *But in the preſent*

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Matters theſe Methods ſeem to me little other than if David *had laid down his* Sling *and* Pouch, *and had gone forth to fight the* huffing Philiſtine *in* Saul's *Armour. Neither* Reaſon *nor* Antiquity *can determine any thing immediately concerning theſe Doctrines, whether they be true or not, whether we are to believe them or no.* Our Certainty *of their Truth depends entirely on the* Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt. *The Proofs that Jeſus is the Meſſias lie level to the Senſes or Reaſon of Mankind. And if we have Reaſon to believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias, and are convinced of that,* his Teſtimony *affords us as* good and ſatisfactory Reaſon, *why we ſhould believe what we know he hath taught, as the* Teſtimony *of our* Senſes *can yield us, why we ſhould believe any* Propoſition *which reſpects their* proper Objects. *Our Reaſon doth not immediately judg concerning* the thing *treated of in the Propoſition, but concerning the* Evidence, *whether it be ſuch as by virtue of it we ought to aſſent to the* Propoſition. *The Reaſonableneſs of our believing any particular Doctrine, taught in the New Teſtament, as delivered there, depends upon the* Reaſons *we have to believe that* Jeſus is the Meſſias. *And if we are fully ſatisfied that we have ſufficient Reaſon to believe him to be the Meſſias, our Reaſon muſt certify us, that it is the moſt* reaſonable *thing in the World to believe whatever we know he hath taught. For could there be any Reaſon to doubt whether what he hath ſaid is true, we could not have ſufficient Reaſon to believe that he is the Meſſias. If we believe him to be the Meſſias, his Teſtimony is the fulleſt Evidence we can deſire of the Truth of what he hath taught. And if we allow the* Evidence *to be* compleat *and* full, *tho we cannot form a* diſtinct Idea *of the Matter treated of, we have all imaginable Reaſon to believe the* Propoſition.

When our Adverſaries talk of Reaſon, *as to theſe Mat-*

Matters, they ſeem to mean, that the things diſcourſed of muſt be brought down to that degree, that laying aſide Revelation, we may form diſtinct and clear Notions of the things themſelves, by the ſole Exerciſe of our natural Faculties, ſo that by contemplating them we may find out intrinſick Reaſons to believe or aſſent to the Propoſitions Chriſt hath delivered concerning them. Which is the abſurdeſt *thing that can be. For herein they require that the* Nature *of the things ſhould be* altered, *and they* renounce *Revelation, whilſt they pretend to* avow *and* own it. *And they might with every jot as much Reaſon, require that People ſhould* judg *of* Sounds *by their* Eyes, *and of* Colours *by their* Fingers. *If we were to judg of the Matters themſelves, and to form the Propoſitions originally our ſelves, there would not be any need of ſuch Revelation as we now have, the Meſſias would not have had any occaſion to have ſaid any thing of them, but then we muſt have had new Faculties, and thoſe proportioned to what is diſcourſed of. But the Propoſitions being delivered down to us, there is no need of our having* new Faculties, *it is euough to render it moſt reaſonable for us to believe the Propoſitions, that we have* new Evidence *adminiſtred to our* old Faculties.

When our moſt learned Divines ſpeak of Reaſon, *as to theſe Doctrines, they do not ſpeak of the Doctrines as delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, for no Reaſon can be aſſigned for our believing them under that* preciſe Conſideration, *but only the Teſtimony of Chriſt. But they ſpeak of thoſe* Terms *in which the Church hath delivered her Senſe, in oppoſition to thoſe who repreſented the Words of Chriſt when applied to theſe Matters, as ſignifying no more than the Words of any ordinary Man do, when concerned about moſt obvious and common things. And thus they ſhew that thoſe Terms comprehend a great deal more in them than that*

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other ſort of People pretend is ſignified by our Saviour's Words; and that the Notions theſe Terms do ſtand for, are very conſonant to the Reaſon of Mankind. But they do not pretend that theſe Terms, as ſtrictly expreſſing thoſe Notions, do exhauſt the whole that is comprized in our Saviour's Words. For ſhould they do ſo, they would pretend to comprehend the Matters themſelves Chriſt doth ſpeak of, and to ſet them forth in a clearer Light than he hath done.

A Doctrine or Propoſition is reaſonable, when it truly relates or expreſſeth the Reaſon of the things about which it is concerned; that is, when the Subject and Predicate have ſuch a Connection in the Propoſition, as doth truly expreſs and ſignify the Connection there is betwixt what the Subject and Predicate do ſtand for, and note in the things ſpoken of. Now there is a very great Difference between my underſtanding the Reaſon, the Order, the Relation there is between the things ſpoken of in the Propoſition, i. e. wherein that Order doth conſiſt, or what it is that conſtitutes that Order, and my having Reaſon to believe the Propoſition, which doth relate and declare that there is a certain Order, Relation, and Reaſon between them, or belonging to them. Evidence is the Reaſon or Ground of my Aſſent and Belief. And tho the things ſpoken of are in their own Nature above my reach, yet there may be ſuch Evidence of the Truth of the Propoſition, as may be ſufficient to oblige my Belief of it. The Teſtimony of my Senſes concerning their proper Objects, is the Reaſon of my aſſenting to the Truth of Propoſitions which reſpect thoſe Objects, and not my being able to philoſophize about thoſe Objects, either after the old or new way. I believe the Doctrines I know Chriſt hath taught, not becauſe I can comprehend and philoſophize on the Matters ſpoken of, but becauſe I know that Jeſus, whom I believe to be the Meſſias, hath

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taught them. He fully understood *the* Order *of the Things he* ſpake *of, and* his Teſtimony *is as full* Evidence *to engage my* Belief *of whatever I know he hath taught, as my* Sight *is, to oblige my Aſſent to* Propoſitions *relating to the* proper Objects *of that* Senſe. *Theſe Doctrines are not propos'd to us for* Speculation, *but for our* Uſe *and* Benefit. *We have Evidence enough, even as much as we can with Reaſon deſire, of the Truth of theſe Propoſitions, if we believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias; and our bleſſed Saviour hath given us full* Direction *what Uſe we are to make of them, that we may partake of the* ſingular Advantages *he will communicate thoſe ways. And if inſtead of quarrelling and wrangling about Matters which are far above our loftieſt Speculations, we would ſubmiſſively betake our ſelves to the Methods our Lord doth adviſe and preſcribe us, we might confidently expect the moſt exhilarating Satisfaction concerning theſe Points.* If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf. *John* 7. 17.

Whereas the Socinians *pretend that theſe Doctrines do* contradict our natural Notions: *that is a* Suggeſtion *ſo groſs, one might wonder how* rational Men *could ever entertain ſuch a* dry and ſenſeleſs Conceit, *unleſs it hath ſprung from hence, that hearing that theſe Doctrines muſt* neceſſarily be believed to make Men Chriſtians, *they have concluded that the* Truth *of theſe Doctrines muſt be* judged of *by their* natural Notions. *And to ſpeak the Truth freely, I know not how to remove the* Difficulty, *as long as that* Prejudice *continues. But this I dare affirm with the greateſt Aſſurance, that it cannot with any Colour be ſaid that any of the Doctrines which Chriſt hath taught do contradict our natural Notions, and therefore not theſe in particular: for they do not treat concerning*

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Matters *of which we have any* natural Notions. *Now if theſe Matters were ſpoken of in ſuch a way, that to ſpeak in the ſame manner concerning thoſe things of which we have natural Notions, would be a* Contradiction *to our natural Notions, it cannot with any Senſe be ſaid, that there is* ſuch a Contradiction, *when the Matters diſcourſed of are ſuch, as we have no* natural Notions of. *The* Application of Words *muſt be according to the* Truth of Things, *otherwiſe the Propoſitions would be falſe, and contradict the Truth. Jeſus Chriſt delivered his Doctrines in the Words he uſed, becauſe thoſe Words do truly expreſs the* Reaſon *there is in the things he ſpake of; and we are to* believe *thoſe Propoſitions on his* Authority, *becauſe he hath faithfully related the Truth concerning the Things he ſpeaks of. And if we believe him to be the Chriſt or Meſſias, we can have no Pretence to doubt of the Truth of what we know he hath taught. Could we be ſatisfied that a certain Perſon hath a diſtinct Senſe from what is common to Mankind, and that there are Objects peculiar to that Senſe, we ſhould have as much Reaſon to believe what he ſaith concerning thoſe Objects, as we have to be ſatisfied that he hath ſuch a Senſe, that there are Objects peculiar to it, and that he is a Perſon of Diſcernment and Integrity. And if he ſhould ſpeak of thoſe Objects in ſuch a manner as would be a Contradiction to our natural Notions, did he ſpeak ſo concerning thoſe things which are the Objects of our Senſes, and preciſely under that Conſideration, we ſhould have no Reaſon to ſay he contradicts our natural Notions, whilſt he diſcourſes of things which we know nothing at all of, but purely by his Information. He is to accommodate his Words to the Reaſon and Truth of the Things he diſcourſes of, not to the Notions we have of Matters which are quite different. And the Reaſon we have to believe what he ſaith of thoſe things,*

things, bears a Proportion to the Reaſons we have to be ſatisfied of his Credibility, *and depends not at all on our forming clear and diſtinct Notions of the things themſelves, much leſs on our adjuſting what he ſaith to the Notions we have of other things, which are perfectly of* another Nature.

The main Buſineſs of Antiquity, *with relation to theſe Doctrines, is either,* 1ſt. *To ſhew upon what Occaſion other Words than thoſe in which Chriſt and his Apoſtles delivered theſe Doctrines, were made uſe of in aſſerting and teaching them. Or,* 2dly. *To ſhew that the Primitive Chriſtians did manifeſt that they did believe the Words in which Chriſt and his Apoſtles delivered theſe Doctrines, do comprehend a great deal more than what the Oppoſers of the* Divinity of Chriſt, *and* of the Holy Ghoſt, *pretend is the full Senſe of them. Or,* 3dly. *To ſhew that the Senſe in which we underſtand the* Terms, *in which we ordinarily ſpeak of theſe* Doctrines, *was the agreed and ſettled Senſe of them, in the Chriſtian Church, when theſe Terms were fixed on to be ordinarily uſed in diſcourſing of, and profeſſing our Belief of theſe Doctrines.*

Thus the Diſcourſes about Reaſon *and* Antiquity *do not immediately reach theſe Doctrines, as Chriſt hath taught them, but the way of expreſſing them when we deliver our ſelves concerning them in other Words than Chriſt hath done. When we uſe other Terms in ſpeaking of theſe Doctrines, than Chriſt hath delivered them in, our Words are accommodated to the* natural Notions *we have of Things: And tho theſe* Notions *comprehend much more than the Notions do which we oppoſe, yet they do not contain the* whole Meaning *of Chriſt, as delivered in the Words he hath uſed, for that far ſurpaſſes our* Capacities. *So that when all is done,* we muſt come to this at laſt, to believe theſe Doctrines as Chriſt hath delivered them,

them, and for this very Reaſon, becauſe he hath taught them. *Now before a Perſon can be brought to this, he muſt believe that* Jeſus is the Meſſias. *And if the* due Belief *that* Jeſus is the Meſſias *doth not* conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, *I cannot imagine how the* Belief *of other Articles can* conſtitute him a Chriſtian, *ſeeing that Belief is the formal Reaſon of his believing the other Articles, and his believing other Articles is no more but a* repeated Belief *of that Article, in proportion to the Occaſions which are adminiſtred to him for it. Produce as large a Proof as is poſſible, that the Church hath all along taught* ſuch a Doctrine, *that ſhe hath taught it in* ſuch Words, *that ſhe underſtood thoſe Words in* ſuch a Senſe, *before a Perſon can be ſatisfied regularly that he is obliged to believe it, he muſt be convinced that* Jeſus is the Meſſias, *and he muſt be ſatisfied that* that Jeſus *hath taught it. The like may be ſaid as to* Reaſon. *When you have produced as many Reaſons as you can, that there may be more* Subſiſtencies *than* one *in the* Divine Nature, *you can neither prove the* Neceſſity, *nor the* Certainty, *nor the* Number *of them, by Reaſon. But as to all theſe Matters, the* Teſtimony of the Meſſias *muſt determine our* Belief. *Our Reaſon doth not only fall ſhort, as to the* manner *how theſe things are, but alſo as to the* Truth *and* Certainty *of them. And our Reaſon cannot aſſure us that this is all that is imported by and comprehended in the Words, in which the Meſſias hath delivered his Doctrines.*

Mr. Edwards *in his Socinian Creed,* p. 130. *doth ſtile the Propoſition diſcourſed of, (tho he words it otherwiſe than it ought to be)* A Muſhroom Notion, that hath no Root and Foundation, *and ſaith,* It is probable it will ſoon decay and come to nothing. *But this Notion is not of ſuch a late Original*

as

as he pretends, if Chriſt and his Apoſtles are to be credited concerning it. And tho I pay Mr. Edwards *a great Deference, yet I muſt declare I cannot but prefer their Word to his. It is ſo far from having* no Root and Foundation, *that it is the* Root *of the* New Teſtament, *and the* Foundation *on which the* Chriſtian Church *is built. And whereas he ſaith,* It is probable it will ſoon decay and come to nothing; Probabilities *are of little Weight, when placed in the* Ballance *againſt* Certainties. *I am perſwaded it will continue ſafe to the end of the World, becauſe the Meſſias hath undertaken that* the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, *Mat.* 16. 18.

If all the Deiſts, Scepticks, Socinians, *&c. in the World, ſhould pretend to approve of the Propoſition diſcourſed of, and that they do believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias, I ſhall not renounce the Propoſition on that account. But if they continue regardleſs of, oppoſe, or refuſe to endeavour to underſtand and believe the particular Doctrines the Meſſias hath taught, I will maintain in oppoſition to them all, that they do not* believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias, *with* ſuch a Faith as is neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian.

Tho I think I am not miſtaken about the Point debated, yet I will attend diligently to Scripture *and* Reaſon, *and endeavour to yield a* juſt Submiſſion *to them, tho offered by the meaneſt Man living. But if* Imperious Ramble *ſhall drop from the Learneded Perſon in the whole Univerſe, touching this Matter, it will not be honoured with* either *of thoſe* Titles, *but be utterly diſregarded by,* Reader,

Your Faithful Servant,

S. BOLD.

A Brief Reply to Mr. Edwards's *Brief Reflections*, &c.

THE Reverend Mr. *Edwards* hath cauſed a *Poſtſcript* to be *tack'd* to *his Socinian Creed*, intituled, *Brief Reflections on a ſhort Diſcourſe of the true Knowledg of Chriſt Jeſus*, &c. That Reverend Author, amongſt his other *Excellencies*, is taken notice of for his Skill in *Critical Learning*, which requires a *gueſſing Faculty*. This *Talent* he hath been pleaſed to exerciſe to a conſiderable *Extent* in the preſent Papers, termed *Brief Reflections*, &c. But as it is often the *miſhap* of thoſe who *indulge* much to *Conjectures*, that their *Gueſſes* are not always *right*, ſo it happens to Mr. *Edwards* in the *preſent Caſe:* For notwithſtanding his *Gatherings*, and *Findings*, and many *probable Shows*, there is not (to my particular knowledg) *one* word of *Truth* in the whole *Lump* of his *Gueſſes*. He is every jot as much out in every particular *here*, as he was in his former Writings, when he both aſſured his *Reader* he could not believe Mr. *L.* was the Author of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, &c. and ſubſtituted his Reaſons why he could not believe it; and yet he is *peremptory* in theſe Papers, that that ſame *Gentleman* was the *Author* of that *Treatiſe*. So that it is evident Mr. *Edwards* is not ſo *ſure* in his *Gueſſes*, no not when he hath declared the *Grounds* on which they are *erected*, as, that either other People, or he

himſelf may depend on them, as *infallible Oracles*, or of ſuch *Credibility*, that any ſtreſs ſhould be laid on them; tho he *ſincerely proteſts that he intends to give vent to Truth (and that only)*.

Mr. *Edwards* hath thought fit to continue his *late way* of Writing in theſe Papers, wherein (conſidering the number of Pages) there is as much *Banter*, as in his *Socinianiſm Unmask'd*. Theſe parts of his *Diſcourſe* I ſhall paſs over very *lightly*; for whatever Impreſſion ſuch Paſſages may make on thoſe who have not been inured to ſuch kind of *Treatment*, they make very little on me, who have been accuſtomed a long time together, to be entertained with ſuch ſort of *Reflections*, not only from Perſons in all Reſpects very much *below* Mr. *Edwards*, but from ſome, who *wore* a more *ſublime Character*, both in *Church* and *State*, than Mr. *Edwards* doth, (I do not ſay than he deſerves in the *Church*) tho I am of Opinion, if all their *Reading* were put together, it would not amount to *one half* of what Mr. *Edwards* is *Maſter of*. Theſe things only reſpect my *Perſon*, not the *Cauſe*: and as for my ſelf, I can bear with Peoples dealing with that as they pleaſe; they can hardly entertain more contemptible Thoughts of me, than I ought to have of my ſelf. And if their loading me by their words, with all they have a mind to, may but help me to be duly low in my own Thoughts, I ſhall reap more Advantage by it, than they can from the Pleaſure they feel in the exerciſe of that *Faculty*. I have met with many, very much beneath Mr. *Edwards*, in reſpect of *laudable Accompliſhments*, every whit as ready and expert in this ſort of *Talk* as he appears to be, which makes me conclude, that this *kind of Diſcourſe* doth

doth not reſult from the *eminency* of Mens *Parts*, but that Mr. *Edwards*'s having made no greater a Proficiency in it, proceeds from *Nature's* being under the reſtraint of thoſe *noble Endowments* in him, which many want, who have the *other* in common with him.

Indeed in ſome Pages, Mr. *Edwards* doth uſe much ſofter, and more kind Expreſſions than I could expect from him; for which exceſs of Charity, I return him my thanks (provided the *King of Ham* may not be thought to have a Hand here) as alſo that he hath taken ſuch ſpeedy Care, by altering his *Tone*, to prevent my being over much ſwoln, becauſe of thoſe *favourable words* which happened to *drop* from his *Pen*. Wherein his Prudence, with reſpect to himſelf, may not be altogether unworthy of Obſervation: for not knowing but my weakneſs might be ſuch, thoſe *gentle Words* might from a Perſon of his *Figure*, perfectly overwhelm me with *Joy*, that he might not be thought to have a Hand in my *Death*, he hath been pleaſed to determine me a *Felo de ſe*, ſaying *he hath diſpatched himſelf*. Mr. *Edwards* is pleaſed to ſay, *any Man may diſcern a Mercenary ſtroke all along the Animadverſions*. This, it's true, I ought not to look upon as ſaid to me, becauſe Mr. *Edwards* is poſitive I did not write them; but leſt all who read him, ſhould not take his Word for it, and therefore think the *Aſperſion* ſticks on me, I may take leave to ſay on my own behalf, that I think I have hardly ever appeared on a *faſhionable Subject*, or to accommodate my Diſcourſe on any Subject to a *predominant Humour*. I am certain I never knew any Man write againſt me, who fail'd of *ſpeedy Preferment*. And I heartily wiſh Mr. *Edwards*

may meet with the ſame *Fortune*; and that in ſome proportion to his *juſt Deſerts*, and thoſe *eminent Qualifications* with which he is ſtored, and for which I mightily *reverence* him. For tho I cannot juſtify every Expreſſion he uſeth, yet I am perſwaded he is a very *good Man*, as well as a Perſon of very *much Reading*. 'Tis true, there ſeems to be ſome *Vinegar* in his *Ink*; but I am ſenſible that Men of *warm* and *cholerick Tempers* are ſomewhat apt to be *teſty*, and may need ſome *Grains of Allowance*, (tho they may not apprehend it) as well as thoſe who are of ſuch a *cold* and *phlegmatick Conſtitution* as I am. A pious Zeal is not always in all Circumſtances Judicious. A *hot Fancy*, when it begins to *rove*, will (without a great deal of Care) take a large Compaſs; and when upon the *reflecting Pin*, will have a *fling* at every thing within its *view*. And therefore I do not wonder that the *Sermon*, *Preface*, *Animadverſions*, *Author*, nay a *Gentleman* quite unknown to me, if not to Mr. *Edwards* alſo, and *Bookſellers* ſhould have a *ſhare*, yea that the Street or *Row* ſhould be brought in, and that the *Sign* too, muſt come in for a *Rarity*.

The firſt thing Mr. *Edwards* lays to my charge in my Sermon is, that *I have contradicted the very Propoſition I had laid down*. Now if this be *true*, I am undoubtedly *guilty* of a very great *fault* in *Diſcourſe*. But tho *Mode* and *Figure* were not neceſſary to confute what I had ſaid, they would not have done any hurt if they had been uſed to make the *Contradiction* manifeſt: Nor would it have been an *imputation* to any Perſon's *Ingenuity*, who is profeſſedly, and with very good Reaſon againſt *Clipt Chriſtianity*, to have ſet down my words entirely without *clipping* of them.

To

To ſhew that I contradict the Propoſition I laid down, Mr. *Edwards* doth firſt of all ſet down the Propoſition it ſelf in theſe words; *There is but one Point or Article neceſſary to be believed for the making a Man a Chriſtian.* And then he produceth other words in my Sermon, which he ſaith do contradict that Propoſition. *This* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *he pretends to maintain as an undeniable Truth* (*viz.* the forementioned Propoſition) *and yet he declares that other Points are neceſſary to be believed.* Sermon, *pag.* 32.

Anſw. My words were thus, *pag.* 32. Tho the belief of other Points (or Articles) is not neceſſary to conſtitute a Perſon a Chriſtian, yet other things (or Articles) are neceſſary to be believed by him who is a true Chriſtian. I did not ſay that other Articles are neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian; if I had ſaid ſo, I had contradicted the Propoſition before mentioned; but I only ſaid there are other Articles neceſſary to be believed by him who is already made a Chriſtian, when he underſtands them, and knows that Jeſus Chriſt hath taught them.

Again, Mr. *Edwards* produceth part of a Sentence in *p.*29. of my Sermon. The words I confeſs are all mine, but they do no more contradict the Propoſition I laid down, than my words laſt diſcourſed of did contradict it; as the Reader may plainly ſee, if he will take the Pains to read the whole Sentence as it lies in that Page referred to, where he will find my Propoſition, and the words Mr. *Edwards* quotes in the ſame Sentence. Afterwards Mr. *Edwards* ſets down ſome other words to make out his *Charge*, that I have contradicted the Propoſition I had laid down, referring to *p.*33.

of my Serm. which words are not preciſely mine; but I do not inſiſt on that, for as they are ſet down by him, they do not contradict my Propoſition. Mr. *Edwards* then adds, that I *reckon up ſeveral Articles and Propoſitions, which are the very ſame which he had mentioned in his Diſcourſes againſt the Conceit of one Article.* I will not ſtay to compare them, to ſee whether they are exactly the ſame. The Sermon was writ before I ſaw his Diſcourſes. I may have read them all ſomewhere or other, I pretend not to be *an Original*, but I did not then mind any particular Author, where I had read them altogether. Upon ſuch Occaſions I only ſet down what occurs to my Mind, ſo far as I apprehend pertinent, without troubling my ſelf to try whether I can recollect where I have read any Sentence or Phraſe. I am beholden to ſome or other (for ought I know) for every Paſſage and Word I write. *Now* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *if there be other Points, and particular Articles, and thoſe many, which a ſincere Chriſtian is obliged, and that neceſſarily and indiſpenſably, to underſtand and believe, and aſſent unto* (he ſhould have ſaid, to endeavour to underſtand, *&c.*) *then this Writer doth in effect yield to that Propoſition which I maintained*, viz. *That the Belief of one Article is not ſufficient to make a Man a Chriſtian, and conſequently he runs counter to the Propoſition which he had laid down.*

Anſw. If there are more Articles, *&c.* which a ſincere Chriſtian is obliged to endeavour to underſtand, and then believe, it doth not immediately follow, that the Belief of more than this one Article, *That Jeſus is the Meſſias*, is neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian. It muſt firſt be proved that the explicite Knowledg and Belief of all

thoſe

thoſe Articles, any Chriſtian may be neceſſarily, &c. obliged to endeavour to underſtand and believe, is neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian. And then it will follow, that the Belief of this Article, *That Jeſus is the Meſſias*, is not ſufficient to make a Man a Chriſtian. But the Diſcourſe now, is not concerning the *Truth* of either Mr. *Edwards*'s *Opinion*, or of *mine*, touching that Matter, but whether I did contradict the Propoſition I had laid down. Now ſuppoſing the Propoſition I had laid down were *falſe*, my declaring that there are many Articles which a ſincere Chriſtian is neceſſarily obliged to endeavour to underſtand and then believe, doth not contradict my Propoſition; for my Propoſition was not, That a ſincere Chriſtian is not obliged to endeavour to know, and believe any more than this one Article, *That Jeſus is the Meſſias*. If it were clearly proved, that Jeſus Chriſt hath taught, that the explicit Knowledg and Belief of all thoſe Articles, which any Chriſtian can be neceſſarily obliged to endeavour to know and believe, is abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, then it might very fairly be ſaid, that my Propoſition doth contradict the *Truth*; but it could not with any colour, even then, be pretended that my declaring that there are other Articles, which ſincere Chriſtians are neceſſarily obliged to endeavour to know and believe, doth contradict the Propoſition I had laid down. *For* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *I bring the Buſineſs to this iſſue, If the believing of one ſingle Article be enough to conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, then the Belief of ſomething more is not neceſſary, and indiſpenſable.*

Anſw. If the right Belief of this *ſingle Article*,

that *Jeſus is the Meſſias*, be enough to conſtitute a Man a ſincere Chriſtian, then the Belief of ſomething more is not neceſſary, indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian. Nor hath Mr. *Edwards* produced any Paſſage out of my Sermon, which affirms that any thing more is neceſſarily, *&c.* to be believed, to conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian. *For* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *the knowing or believing of more may be ſome Ornament and Embelliſhment to him*, (*viz.* a Chriſtian) *yet it cannot be ſaid that it is neceſſary and indiſpenſable.*

Anſw. True, it cannot be ſaid to be neceſſary to make him a Chriſtian, but it may be ſaid to be neceſſary, and that he is indiſpenſably obliged to endeavour to know it, and believe it, with reſpect to thoſe Ends and Purpoſes for which it is revealed, and for which he is commanded to endeavour to know and believe it. If Mr. *Edwards* ſpeaks here of knowing and believing Doctrines which Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught and revealed, (for if he means knowing and believing other Matters, it is not to our purpoſe) the diſtinguiſhing of *Goſpel-Doctrines* into *neceſſary*, and ſuch as are only for *Ornament and Embelliſhment*, ſeems ſomewhat *harſh* to me: A *Diſtinction* in Matters of *Faith*, very like to that in *Practicals*, between *Evangelical Precepts* and *Counſels*. The Reaſon Mr. *Edwards* doth aſſign for his ſaying that the knowing and believing of more than what is neceſſary to conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, cannot be ſaid to be neceſſary and indiſpenſable, is this, *becauſe nothing is ſo* (*viz.* neceſſary and indiſpenſable) *in Chriſtianity, but what contributes to the making a Man a Chriſtian, a ſincere Chriſtian.*

Anſw.

Anſw. We are now diſcourſing concerning the *Articles* which are neceſſarily to be believed (whether one or more) not concerning the *Faith* with which they are to be believed, therefore what is neceſſary to a Man's being a ſincere Chriſtian is not the Subject of our Enquiry here. By this term *Chriſtianity*, therefore Mr. *Edwards* muſt mean *the Articles neceſſarily to be believed* to make a Man *a Chriſtian.* And the term *Chriſtianity*, in this Propoſition, *There is nothing neceſſary and indiſpenſable in Chriſtianity, but what contributes to the making a Man a Chriſtian*, muſt then ſignify either *a certain preciſe Number of Articles* collected out of the *New Teſtament*, the Belief of every one of which is indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian: Or, *all the Doctrines, Propoſitions*, and *Articles*, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, and are contained in *the New Teſtament.* If Mr. *Edwards* underſtands *Chriſtianity* in this *latter Senſe*, then this Propoſition, *There is nothing indiſpenſably neceſſary in Chriſtianity but what contributes to the making a Man a Chriſtian*, muſt be underſtood (I think) in one of theſe Senſes.

1. *There is no Doctrine, Propoſition, or Article in the New Teſtament, but the explicit Knowledg and Belief of it is indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian; becauſe there is no Doctrine,* &c. *in the New Teſtament, but what contributes to the making of a Man a Chriſtian.* And if this be his Meaning, then the *Articles* he hath reckoned up are not *ſufficient*, when believed, *to make a Man a Chriſtian*, becauſe there are a great many more Articles in the *New Teſtament* than thoſe he hath named. And it will be very hard for any Man to prove, that no Man can be a Chriſtian till he hath

hath an explicit Knowledg and Belief of every particular Article taught in the *New Teſtament*.

2. *There is no Article*, &c. *taught in the New Teſtament that is indiſpenſably neceſſary to any purpoſe, but what is indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian; and that becauſe there is no Article there, neceſſary to any purpoſe, but what contributes to the making a Man a Chriſtian.* If this be his Senſe, then no Man who is already a Chriſtian, can (in his Judgment) be under an indiſpenſable Obligation to endeavour to know and believe any thing more of the Mind of Chriſt, than he knoweth already. He is not indiſpenſably obliged to endeavour *to grow in Knowledg and Faith*, at leaſt *extenſively*: but if there be more *Doctrines* in the *New Teſtament* than he already underſtands and believes, he is perfectly at liberty with reſpect to them all. He may endeavour to know and believe them if he thinks fit, elſe not. Now if this be *true*, my ſaying that there are other Articles, which thoſe who are Chriſtians already are indiſpenſably obliged to endeavour to know and then believe, is falſe, but yet it doth not contradict the Propoſition I had laid down.

3. *There is no Article in the New Teſtament indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, but what contributes to make a Man a Chriſtian.* If this is Mr. *Edwards*'s meaning, there may be much of *Truth* in it, tho there ſeems to be more than what is *true* in it. There is no Article in the New Teſtament indiſpenſably neceſſary to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, but what is indiſpenſably neceſſary to that purpoſe. This is moſt true and certain. But if Mr. *Edwards* doth mean that there is nothing in the *New Teſtament* that

that may contribute to the making a Man a Chriſtian, but it is indiſpenſably neceſſary to be believed to make any Man a Chriſtian, I think he is much miſtaken. For there are many things the Knowledg whereof may contribute to make a Man a Chriſtian, and yet the Knowledg of them doth not make him a Chriſtian. And more things may contribute to the making of one Man a Chriſtian, and fewer to the making of another Man a Chriſtian. There is a very *great Difference* between what may *contribute* to the making of a Man a Chriſtian, and what is *indiſpenſably neceſſary to conſtitute and make a Man a Chriſtian.* But let this be as it will, it doth not prove the Contradiction inſiſted on. Suppoſing Mr. *Edwards* in the right in all theſe Matters, they amount to no more, than that either my Propoſition is falſe, or that what I have ſaid in other Places of my Sermon are falſe; but they do not prove that thoſe Paſſages do contradict the Propoſition I had laid down, which is the thing Mr. *Edwards* labours to prove. If the term *Chriſtianity*, in the Propoſition we are ſpeaking of, be taken in the *firſt Senſe*, then there is ſuppoſed a certain Number of Articles neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, and ſo the Propoſition amounts to this; *There is no Article amongſt thoſe which are neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, but what contributes to the making a Man a Chriſtian.* And if there be more Articles than this, *that Jeſus is the Meſſias*, neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, then it is granted, that every one of them muſt contribute as much as pertains unto it, by Chriſt's Appointment, to make a Man a Chriſtian. But whether the Belief of this Article alone,

alone, that *Jesus is the Messias*, or whether the Belief of more Articles be indispensably necessary by Christ's Appointment to make a Man a Christian, is not the Point now betwixt Mr. *Edwards* and me, but whether the Passages he hath produced out of my Sermon do contradict the Proposition I had laid down. But Mr. *Edwards*'s Proposition, taken in this Sense, is nothing to the Contradiction he speaks of. *Wherefore* (saith Mr. *Edwards*) *it undeniably follows that when this Gentleman acknowledges that there are more Articles than this one proposed to be believed, and that necessarily and indispensably, he must needs grant that those Articles which are thus necessary and indispensable, are necessary to make a Man a Christian.*

Answ. If I had said there were more Articles than that one, proposed to be necessarily believed to make a Man a Christian, I had granted what Mr. *Edwards* doth say I must needs grant, and then I had contradicted the Proposition I had laid down; but no such Passage is produced by Mr. *Edwards* out of my Sermon. When I said there were more Articles necessary to be believed, I said they were necessary to be believed, when known by him who is a true Christian, not necessary to be believed to make him a Christian, who is a Christian before he believes or knows them; but necessary to those Ends for which Christ hath ordained them to be believed by them who are Christians. And when I say there are many Points or Articles which Jesus Christ hath taught and revealed, which sincere Christians are indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand, and then believe; the indispensable Obligation I speak of ariseth from Christ's exerting his Au-

Authority in commanding them who are Chriſtians to endeavour to know and believe thoſe Points, and from their ſolemn Engagement to do ſo, in their reſigning up themſelves entirely to him. Which methinks ſhould be very clear to every one who will acknowledg that Chriſt's Command, and a Chriſtian's moſt ſolemn Engagement, can bring him under an indiſpenſable Obligation. And now I think the *Caſe is plain*; and if there be *Prejudice* on either ſide, let the indifferent Reader judg who is moſt likely to be *maſtered by it.*

He goes on (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *ſtill to contradict himſelf, ſaying a true Chriſtian muſt aſſent unto this, That Chriſt Jeſus is God*, p. 35.

Anſw. My Words were theſe, When a true Chriſtian underſtands that Chriſt Jeſus hath taught that he is God, he muſt aſſent unto it. *Obſerve it* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *He Muſt, he owns here that there is an abſolute Neceſſity of this Belief.*

Anſw. What? to make a Man a Chriſtian? I neither ſaid ſo, nor did I ſay there was an abſolute Neceſſity of that Belief. I was ſpeaking of one who is a Chriſtian; and ſuch an one, I ſaid, is under an indiſpenſable Obligation to *endeavour* to underſtand what Chriſt hath taught concerning himſelf; and underſtanding that he hath taught that he is God, he muſt aſſent to it, it is his *Duty* to do ſo, he is under an *Obedientiall Neceſſity* to aſſent to it. *Whereupon* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *I ask him, Is this Belief neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian or not?*

Anſw. Seeing my Words were ſo very plain, I cannot underſtand what occaſion there was to ask this *Queſtion.* I will not encroach on their *Propriety*, who aſſume to themſelves the *Knack* of *Gueſſing*,

Gueſſing, but will declare my Senſe freely. I mean no Ill. And if I am miſtaken, or in an *Error*, I am ready to receive *Inſtruction*, to be convinced by good Evidence, and to be reduced to the *Truth*. I think *this Belief* is not *abſolutely neceſſary* to make a Man a *Chriſtian*; and that no Man can believe *aright* that *Jeſus is God*, till he is a *Chriſtian*, and believes it becauſe he knows that Jeſus, whom he believes to be the *Chriſt* or *Meſſias*, hath taught it, at leaſt till he knows that he who was to be the *Meſſias* is *God*. And in *this caſe* he muſt know that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſias*, before he can know *he is God*. If any Man pretend he can or does rationally believe that Jeſus is God, upon any other account, I am pretty certain he doth not believe it as a Chriſtian ought to believe it. 'Tis well if a clamorous decrying this *Notion*, that the *right Belief that Jeſus is the Meſſias, is that which conſtitutes and makes a Man a Chriſtian*, does not *contribute* to further *Socinianiſm*, &c. tho contrary to the *Intentions* and *Deſigns* of *learned* and *good Men*, who happen to yield a little further to their *Paſſions* than in ſtrictneſs they *ought*. *That Jeſus is God*, is an *Article* to be believed by thoſe who are *Chriſtians*, not by thoſe who are not yet Chriſtians. Men cannot judg of Matters, nor believe any thing but according to the *Light* and *Evidence* they do enjoy. And if we make the Belief of *this* and *other Articles* which are *peculiar* to thoſe who are already *Chriſtians*, indiſpenſably neceſſary to make Men Chriſtians, they who are not Chriſtians will judg of *this* and *thoſe other Articles*, according to that *Light* they have, whereby to judg of things in their *preſent State*. I do not wonder

that

that many are *Socinians*, and that many do treat the *great Articles* of the *Goſpel* ſo very *indecently*. For hearing that theſe Articles are to be believed to make them Chriſtians, they will and muſt judg of them by the mere *Light of Nature* and *Reaſon*, and therefore will not admit of any thing but what lies *level* with, or is *proportionate* to the *Light* by which they are to judg. Let the Articles neceſſarily to be believed be *more* or *fewer*, they will *judg* of every one of them by the *ſame Rule*, and muſt do ſo, till they have *another Rule* to judg of Matters by. And till a Man is a Chriſtian, he hath no Rule whereby to determine his Judgment and Faith abſolutely, but natural Light and Reaſon. I think it is as *unfair* to exact Belief of any Man that *Jeſus is God*, before he is a *Chriſtian*, as to require a Man to judg *aright* concerning an Object peculiar to *a Senſe*, that he hath not. Did People generally heartily believe *Jeſus to be the Meſſias*, I am perſwaded a much greater *Veneration* would be manifeſted for the *Books* which make up the *New Teſtament*, and the *Doctrines* delivered in them, than is commonly diſcovered. I apprehend that the *irreverent Oppoſition* that is made to ſome of the greateſt and moſt momentous Doctrines taught in the *New Teſtament*, proceeds more from the want of a *due Belief that Jeſus is the Meſſias*, than from an *Affectation* to combat thoſe *Doctrines*. When a Man doth *duly believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias*, he hath as *ſatisfying Evidence* of the Truth of *every Article* he attains to know Jeſus hath taught, as the *brighteſt natural Evidence* can be, to ſatisfy concerning Matters within the Verge and *Compaſs* of *Nature*. The Grounds, the Motives, the Inducements

ducements (I ſpeak not concerning ſupernatural Influences on the Mind and Heart) to believe what is indiſpenſably neceſſary to be believed to make Men Chriſtians, are accommodated to our natural and rational Powers. But I cannot ſay ſo concerning the particular Doctrines of the Goſpel, which are to be believed for this very Reaſon, *Becauſe Jeſus hath revealed and taught them.* Natural Reaſon is of great uſe in order to our being Chriſtians, and ſo it is after we are Chriſtians; but it is not the immediate Rule by which our Belief of the Doctrines delivered in the Goſpel is to be determined; for that is to be founded on, and reſolved into Chriſt's Authority, exerted in his declaring and teaching thoſe Points.

He cannot ſay (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *It is not*, (viz. That the Belief that Jeſus is God, is not neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian) *becauſe to believe him to be God, who really is ſo, is no indifferent thing in Chriſtianity.*

Anſw. A Man muſt know that Jeſus is God, before he can believe him to be God: And if a Man cannot know him to be God, before he is a Chriſtian, then that Belief is not abſolutely neceſſary to conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian. But what Mr. *Edwards* doth mean by *Chriſtianity* here, is as hard to underſtand, as in ſome other Places where the ſame Term is uſed by him. If he mean, that when a Chriſtian knows that it is taught in the New Teſtament, that ſuch an one is really God, it is no indifferent thing whether he believe it or no, that is, he is not left to his Liberty to believe it or not, he ſaith the very Truth. But if he means that a Perſon cannot be a Chriſtian, till he believes that whomſoever the New Teſtament doth de-

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clare is really God, is ſo; I am ſo far from ſaying ſo, that I think he muſt be a Chriſtian before he can believe them to be ſo, notwithſtanding they really are ſo. Indeed no Man can be a true Chriſtian till *he believes him to be God who really is ſo*; he muſt believe the true and living God: But that is ſo far from conſtituting a Man a Chriſtian, that it is the very firſt Principle and Ground of Natural Religion; therefore I do not think that to be Mr. *Edwards*'s meaning here. *But* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *this is abſolutely requiſite to conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian; for a Man cannot be ſuch, unleſs he hath a Knowledg of him that is true God.*

Anſw. It is abſolutely requiſite to conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, to know him who is true God; for otherwiſe, he who is a Chriſtian, could not be under any Obligation to believe Jeſus to be God. But notwithſtanding Jeſus is really God, and a Man cannot be a Chriſtian without knowing *this Jeſus*, who is really God; it will not follow from thence, that the knowing him *to be God*, is abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian. It is not a Man's believing that Jeſus is God, that conſtitutes him a Chriſtian: what can *conſtitute* a Man a *Chriſtian*, but the right and due believing *him to be the Chriſt or Meſſias*, who *really is ſo?* It was not his being God, that conſtituted him the Chriſt or Meſſias; for then he would not have been *freely*, but *neceſſarily* the *Chriſt* and *Saviour of Sinners*. A Man cannot be a true Chriſtian, unleſs he knows him who is true God; becauſe he who is the Meſſias or Chriſt, is true God; and a Man cannot be a true Chriſtian, unleſs he know him who is the Meſſias or Chriſt. But it is not the knowing him to be true God, but the right knowing of him to

be the Meſſias, or Chriſt, that doth conſtitute or make a Man a Chriſtian: could a Man know him to be *God*, without knowing him to be the *Chriſt*, this Knowledg would but conſtitute him a *Theiſt*, not a *Chriſtian*. Whether it doth inevitably follow from what I had ſaid, that I muſt hold, that the aſſenting to this Propoſition, that Chriſt Jeſus is God, is neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian; and whether I have *in effect poſitively ſaid* (as Mr. *Edwards* doth phraſe it) that the believing of more than that one Article before mentioned, is abſolutely requiſite to make a Man a Chriſtian, I leave the Reader now to determine. But for my own part, I am not ſenſible that I have yet contradicted the Propoſition I had laid down, which is the thing Mr. *Edwards* is ſtill upon.

In another Place (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *ſpeaking of the Account which the Scripture gives of the Holy Spirit*, viz. *That he is God, he adds, that a true Chriſtian is as much obliged to believe this, as to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt*, pag. 40.

Anſw. What my words are, may be ſeen in the Page referred to. But certainly I did not ſay, that a Perſon is as much obliged to believe that, to make him a Chriſtian, as he is to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, to make him a Chriſtian. *See here* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *the force and energy of Truth, it will make its way through the Teeth of thoſe who oppoſe it.*

Anſw. Let the Reader conſider my words referred to before, and then conclude whether the Force and Strength of Prejudice doth not appear ſo great as to prevail ſometimes with People to oppoſe Truth in ſpite of their Teeth, and Lips, yea and Eyes too.

Mr.

Mr. *Edwards* ſaith I have plainly *and profeſſedly contradicted the Propoſition I had laid down*; *for this* (ſaith he) *is the Caſe*, *If a true Chriſtian be as much obliged to believe one as the other*, *then it is certain that Chriſtianity is as much concerned in the Belief of the one as of the other*; *and if ſo*, *then a Man cannot be a Chriſtian without this Belief.*

Anſw. The former part of that Speech may be *true*, or *otherwiſe*, according to the Senſe in which the term *Chriſtianity* ſhall be underſtood. But there is no conſequence at all, that becauſe *one who is a Chriſtian*, may be as much obliged to believe that *Truth*, or *Doctrine*, as the *other*; therefore the Belief of it is ſo *neceſſary*, that a Man cannot be a *Chriſtian* without it. It is as neceſſary for me to believe that *Jeſus* was at *Cana of Galilee*, and *turned Water into Wine* there, as it is, that he was *Crucified* without the Gates of *Jeruſalem*; becauſe I have the ſame *Evidence* for the one, I have for the other. But I cannot ſay it is of as much importance for a Man to know the one, as it is to know the other; much leſs can I ſay that no Man can be a *Chriſtian*, till he knows and believes that *Jeſus was at* Cana *in* Galilee, *&c.* And tho I cannot *ſubmit to this non-ſenſe*, *that a Man can be a Chriſtian*, *tho he believe not thoſe things without which he cannot be a Chriſtian*; Yet if any Man will call this *non-ſenſe*, viz. That a Man may be a *Chriſtian* without the explicit Belief of ſeveral Articles, which after he is a Chriſtian, he may be obliged to believe, I can ſubmit very eaſily, and with a great deal of *Reaſon* to it.

Mr. *Edwards* having thus concluded his Proof of my *ſelf-Contradiction*, is pleaſed in the next Page to ſet down theſe words. *Tho he appears in*

the Form of a Preacher, yet he hath ſaid nothing anſwerable to the ſpecious Title of his Sermon, The true Knowledg of Chriſt Jeſus; *but on the contrary, hath ſaid very ill things, to the leſſening, and impairing, yea to the defaming of that Knowledg and Belief of our Saviour, and of the Articles of Chriſtianity, which are neceſſarily required of us.*

Anſw. If Mr. *Edwards* had affirmed that I had ſaid nothing anſwerable to what he would have ſaid on that great Subject, *The true Knowledg of Chriſt Jeſus*, had he undertaken to diſcourſe of it, I ſhould readily agree to it: But ſeeing he ſaith I have ſaid nothing anſwerable to the *Title of my Sermon*, it would not have been *unfair* to have ſet down the true Title of my Sermon, which was, *A ſhort Diſcourſe of the true Knowledg*, &c. And if I have ſaid nothing *anſwerable* to the Subject, yet the Sermon is ſomething *anſwerable* to the *Title*; for then it muſt be acknowledged *ſhort* with a *Witneſs*. If I have ſaid (as Mr. *Edwards* affirms) any thing to the *leſſening, impairing, or defaming of the Knowledg and Belief of our Saviour*, or of any Articles in the *New Teſtament*, I cannot be ſorry enough for it. I am ſure I had no Deſign to ſay any thing of that Nature or Tendency; I think I have expreſly aſſerted, that *all the Doctrines* in the New Teſtament are of *Divine Authority*; that being known by Chriſtians to be taught there, they muſt be believed by them; that Chriſtians are obliged to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to know them; and that Peoples attaining to a Knowledg of them before they are true Chriſtians, may contribute much to the bringing of them to be true Chriſtians. Indeed I did not aſſert, that the Belief of them all is indiſpenſably neceſſary

neceſſary to make and conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, but did declare it was my Opinion, that the right Belief of this one Article, *That Jeſus is the Chriſt* or *Meſſias*, doth conſtitute and make a Man *a Chriſtian*. Now whether the Belief of this *one Article alone*, or of *more Articles*, be indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, doth not depend on *my Judgment*, nor on the *Judgment of any other Man*. That muſt be learned from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*: If they have determined for more than the *one* before mentioned, then more are neceſſary, let who will ſay the contrary. If they have determined for the *one* abovenamed, then that alone is indiſpenſably neceſſary to the purpoſe ſpoken of, tho all the World ſhould oppoſe it, and ſay it is not ſufficient for that *end*, but more Articles muſt neceſſarily be believed to make or conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian. Every honeſt and good Man, who diſcourſes of the Point, will ſpeak according to the beſt of his Judgment. And if any Perſons *differ* in their Judgments about this, *recourſe* is to be had to the *New Teſtament*, to ſee who accords beſt with what *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* have ſaid upon the Matter. Now this I am certain of, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, do *inſiſt* upon *this one Article*, to be believed to make Men *Chriſtians*, and that they have taught many other *Doctrines* in order to their being known, believed, and made uſe of. Upon the beſt Inquiry I have been able yet to make, I cannot find that they have required the Belief of any of thoſe other Doctrines, as abſolutely neceſſary *to make a Man a Chriſtian*. The Reverend Mr. *Edwards*, and many other very Learned and Godly Perſons (whom I very greatly honour,

and reverence for their Labours, Piety, and extraordinary Accompliſhments) do think, they perceive that Chriſt and his Apoſtles did teach and deliver ſome of thoſe Doctrines, as neceſſarily to be believed, to make a Man a Chriſtian. There is then ſome miſtake on one ſide, or on the other. Now before I entertain a *diſparaging Thought* concerning any of thoſe, who are of a *different Judgment* from me in this Matter, the Point ought to be placed in a very good Light, and be exceeding clear on *my ſide:* And an equitable Perſon will perhaps reckon I may with Reaſon expect that the *other Point* be made very plain, before thoſe who eſpouſe it, do grow *Stormy* and *Tempeſtuous*, becauſe I declare my Opinion, and calmly repreſent wherein I conceive the weakneſs of what any of them do offer for the Support or Illuſtration of their Judgment, doth lie. It is agreed on both ſides, that Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, that the Belief of that *one Article* I inſiſt on, is indiſpenſably neceſſary to conſtitute and make a Man a Chriſtian. They alledg ſeveral Texts to prove certain other Propoſitions, as neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, as that other Article is. I acknowledg the Scriptures they quote, are full Proof that the *Propoſitions* contained in them, are *Divine Truths*. But that is not the thing for which they produce thoſe Scriptures, for ſo far we are agreed; but they produce them as *Proofs*, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, have *taught*, that the *explicit Belief* of thoſe *Propoſitions*, is indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian. I own they fully prove the former, but I am utterly at a loſs to find how they *prove the latter*, which is

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the *thing* they are brought to *prove*, and the *very Point* concerning which we *differ*, viz. That Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have as plainly taught (not that theſe Propoſitions are Divine Truths, but) that the Belief of theſe Propoſitions, is as neceſſary to conſtitute or make a Man a Chriſtian, as they have taught that the Belief that Jeſus is the Chriſt or Meſſias, is neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian.

Great Care is to be taken to preſerve the Doctrines of the *New Teſtament*, in their *Purity*, and in their *proper Order*. All the particular Doctrines there taught, are the Doctrines of Chriſt; they are revealed that they may be learned, and then believed upon his Authority; every one of them hath its peculiar and proper Intendment, and is to be uſed and improved eſpecially for that purpoſe. If a Perſon inſiſts on the Neceſſity of one Article, for a purpoſe for which Chriſt did not intend it, he attributes that to it, which doth not belong to it. And if a Perſon oppoſe and reject the Neceſſity of any Article, as to the purpoſe for which it was intended, he does not give it *its full due*. In this Caſe we are not only to conſider, whether Chriſt hath taught and revealed ſuch or ſuch an Article, but alſo for what end and purpoſe he doth more eſpecially require it ſhould be learned and believed. Now it is agreed on all Hands, that the *Belief that Jeſus is the Meſſias*, is by *Chriſt's appointment*, *neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian*. The Notion that the *due* and *right Belief of this alone*, doth conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian, preſerves to all the other Articles, all the *Neceſſity* that Chriſt aſſigns them, unleſs it can be made out, that he hath made the Belief of

every one of them, or of a certain Number of them neceſſary to this very purpoſe: And till that be very clearly proved, there ſeems no great Reaſon, that he who advanceth the aforeſaid Notion, ſhould be treated preſently as if he came immediately out of the *Bottomleſs-pit*, and would fill the whole World with *Locuſts*, and worſe Plagues than ever *Egypt* was afflicted with, if not doomed peremptorily and without delay, to bear all the *invidious Characters and Epithets* that an exalted *fiery Genius* can make a ſhift to jumble together.

The Notion of the *one Article*, may induce thoſe who embrace it, to eſteem more Perſons Chriſtians than the other Notion can allow of; for they of the former, muſt reckon all thoſe Chriſtians, who give *credible Evidence* that they believe indeed *that Jeſus is the Meſſias, and accept of, and ſubmit to him as their Lord:* and thus far I fancy the Advantage is on the former's ſide, for I conceive there is no hurt in letting *Charity*, as well as *Patience*, *have its perfect Work.* And if I be not much miſtaken, that Notion contributes moſt to engage People to take particular Care, that the Belief of *Jeſus's being the Meſſias*, may be very well, and firmly ſettled in their Hearts: yea, it ſeems to me, to be the ſureſt way to bring them to the ſound Belief of the other Articles. But let theſe things paſs for *Suggeſtions*, that come from a *cold phlegmatick Temper*; yet methinks *this Notion* ſhould be acknowledged to comport beſt with the *Honour* of the *Goſpel*, ſince it acquaints Chriſtians, that by virtue of their being Chriſtians, on the account of their unfeigned Belief of this Point, they are under an indiſpenſable Obligation

gation to endeavour continually to encreaſe in the Knowledg and Belief of what Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught. Whereas by the other Notion, (according to Mr. *Edwards*) when once they believe *as much* as is *neceſſary to make them Chriſtians*, they need not concern themſelves to know any thing more of what Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, except for *Ornament-ſake*.

This we are ſure of, that *Jeſus Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* do lay a *particular ſtreſs* on this *one Article*, for the Purpoſe diſcourſed of: And it is not ſo evident that they require the explicit Belief of any more Articles as abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian.

Beſides, if the Nature of the thing be well conſidered, *viz.* what we mean when we uſe the term *Chriſtian*, it may afford ſome Light to this Matter. Is the true Account of a Chriſtian, one who believes juſt ſuch a number of Doctrines? or one who believes in Jeſus Chriſt? who owns *Jeſus* to be the *Chriſt*, and therefore hath devoted and yielded up himſelf entirely to learn from, and be governed and ſaved by him?

Moreover, if all thoſe Articles Mr. *Edwards* inſiſts on are not to be expreſly mentioned in the Definition or Deſcription of that *Faith* which *juſtifies a Sinner*, and *conſtitutes him a Chriſtian*, then ſomething will be left out of it, which muſt *neceſſarily be explicitely believed*, according to his *Notion*, in order to his *Juſtification*, and to his being a *Chriſtian*; but if no particular Article beſides this, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, is to be inſerted into it, then I conceive it muſt be granted, that *is is only the Belief of that Article that doth make and conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian.* In a word, if the

the Belief of more Articles be neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, then thoſe who are for the Neceſſity of the one Article alone as to this purpoſe, do not attribute to other Articles their full due; and if the right Belief of that one Article be all that is abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, then thoſe who inſiſt on the explicit Belief of more Articles, as abſolutely neceſſary to that purpoſe, attribute more to them than Chriſt Jeſus hath ordered. And it may be worth their Conſideration, whether they do not *derogate* therein from the *Honour* due to *Jeſus as the Meſſias*. If the Lord Jeſus hath appropriated this unto himſelf, that the due believing him to be the *Chriſt* or *Meſſias*, ſhall of it ſelf conſtitute and make a Man a Chriſtian, ſo that he will own and acknowledg thoſe for his *Diſciples*, and to be *Chriſtians*, who do ſo believe him to be the *Meſſias*, as to conſign themſelves entirely to him, we cannot introduce any other Articles (tho only ſuch as he hath expreſly taught) to be Sharers with this Article in this Buſineſs, but we raiſe them to a *Poſt* he hath not aſſigned them. Believe as many Articles which Chriſt hath certainly taught as you can, and let them all have all the Honour Chriſt appoints them to have, and uſe them for the Purpoſes he aſſigns them to, but ſet not any of them without his *certain Order* in the *Throne* with himſelf. Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have conſtantly inſiſted on the Neceſſity of Peoples believing this Article, that *Jeſus is the Meſſias*, to *make them Chriſtians*: And if they have not as particularly diſcriminated ſome other Articles as thus neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians, from the reſt they have taught,

Men

Men may ſooner exceed the Bounds they ought to obſerve, when they betake themſelves to ſingle out more Articles as neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians; I ſay, they may ſooner exceed their juſt Limits, than even a forward Imagination will ſuggeſt.

Mr. *Edwards* in the next place is for *addreſſing himſelf more cloſely to me (if he can do it) than he hath done already.* And here he ſpeaks of my *debaſing my ſelf and the Poſt I am in.* But what he hath ſaid doth not convince me, that *I debaſe my ſelf, or the Poſt I am in,* by publiſhing the *Truth:* And the Propoſition I laid down may be the *Truth,* tho it were granted I had *contradicted it* in my Sermon. It is my aſſerting the *Propoſition* (I conceive) which he reckons my debaſing my ſelf, *&c.* not the *Contradiction.* For he hath got over that Part of his Charge, and is to ſpeak *more cloſely to me (if he can)* than that amounted to. Nor do I think it a debaſing of my ſelf to endeavour to ſet a Goſpel-Truth in its true Light, let who will advance it, when I perceive any Attempts made to obſcure and darken it. But if that *great and eminent Perſon* was the *Author* of *the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity,* Mr. *Edwards* now affirms was the Author of it, he can be no Diſparagement to the Cauſe. Any rational Perſon may then be ſatisfied, there is more to be ſaid for it than every haſty Oppoſer may be aware of. Nor do I wonder Mr. *Edwards* ſhould find ſo much fault with my way of Writing, ſince he undertakes to *blame ſome Expreſſions* in that *Author,* whoſe Words are ſo accurately adapted to what he ſpeaks of, that I thought no Man who pretended to judg of *Stiles,* would have re-

flected

flected on him on that account. As for thoſe ſorts of *Sparks* Mr. *Edwards* reckons up in the next place, I have no Acquaintance with any of them, no more than I have with the *Field-Officer*, whom I never heard of till now. But if any of thoſe kinds of Folk Mr. *Edwards* doth ſpeak of have been induced by reading *the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, to believe aright that *Jeſus is the Meſſias*, and do therefore ſeriouſly endeavour to know and believe the other Doctrines Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, and do behave them agreeably thereunto, they do not deſerve the *Denominations* he gives them. If they continue *Deiſts*, *Scepticks*, &c. and yet pretend to admire *the main Point*, *the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* hath advanced, they exceedingly pervert it, and carry themſelves moſt unreaſonably. But we muſt not quit the *Truth*, becauſe the greateſt Enemies to it do pretend to approve *it*, but rather acquaint the World with the right and true Uſe they ſhould make of *it*. We ſhall make but ill Work on't if we will quarrel *Divine Truths*, and *ſacrifice the Doctrines of the Goſpel*, whenever *bad Men* ſhall out of Deſign ſet up for, and cry them up. If they find they can prevail *this way*, it will not be long before they *will get*, not this Article, but every one of thoſe Mr. *Edwards* has a mind ſhould be abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, from us.

Mr. *Edwards* being in the *mood*, hath found out a way both to make me a *Journey-man* to, and to rank me with the *Patrons* of the ſame Perſon, in leſs than the ſpace of one whole Page. But that Eminent Perſon he ſpeaks of needeth not any of the Patrons he hath aſſigned.

As

As for my *unknown Friends* who have ſignified their Affection by Mr. *Edwards*'s Pen, I heartily thank them for their Reſpects; and would much rather they ſhould fear without, than with Cauſe. I would not willingly diſoblige any Man, but be a Friend to every Man, and ſerve all Men to the utmoſt of my Power. But *Friends* or *Enemies* make little Alteration with me, when *Truth* is concerned. Their Expectation from *one Article to none*, I ſuppoſe is brought in rather for *Wit* than for *Friendſhip*, and therefore I muſt paſs over that *bluntly*, for I pretend not to the *Faculty*. Yet I would tell them ſeriouſly, that thoſe who ſhall inſiſt on the Abſolute Neceſſity of twenty Articles to be believed, to make a Man a Chriſtian, if they make but little account of that *one* I inſiſt on, may ſooner part with their whole ſcore, than another who is well ſettled in the Belief of that one, will either part with it, or any other Article he knows is founded upon that one. However, *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.* If my Friends have by this time, in any meaſure recovered their *Amazement*, I would, in order to their better Eſtabliſhment, and to prevent their being ſo eaſily *ſtaggered* again, propound a few Queſtions to them, ſuppoſing all along what Anſwers they would make to them. I would ask them: 1. Do you believe or think that you are Chriſtians? *Anſw.* Yes. 2. Upon what Ground, or for what Reaſon do you believe that? *Anſw.* Becauſe we do believe all thoſe Articles which are neceſſarily to be believed to make People Chriſtians. 3. What be thoſe Articles which muſt neceſſarily be believed to make People Chriſtians? *Anſw.* Here I will ſuppoſe them

to

to name all thoſe Articles Mr. *Edwards* hath mentioned. 4. Upon what Ground do you aſſent unto, and believe theſe Articles? *Anſw.* Becauſe Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught that theſe Articles are neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians. Very well; but not to interrupt our Diſcourſe now, I will conſider at preſent but one part of your Anſwer, *viz.* That you believe theſe Articles, becauſe you know that Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught them. For I conceive you here ground your Belief upon *their Authority*, and ſo believe them, becauſe you know they taught them, before you believe them under that *preciſe and formal Conſideration*, as Articles neceſſarily to be believed to make you Chriſtians. For I ſuppoſe you have that Eſteem and Veneration for Jeſus Chriſt, as to look upon your ſelves obliged to believe whatever you know he hath taught. Therefore I ask, 5. Were you not Chriſtians before you believed all theſe Articles, becauſe you knew that Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles had taught them? *Anſw.* No, for who can ſubmit to ſuch Nonſenſe as to believe or think they are Chriſtians, who do not believe thoſe things, without the Belief of which they cannot be Chriſtians? 6. Why do you believe theſe Articles, becauſe Jeſus and his Apoſtles have taught them, rather than becauſe any other Perſons have taught them? *Anſw.* We believe them, upon our knowing that the Apoſtles taught them, becauſe we know the Apoſtles were commiſſioned by Jeſus to publiſh his Mind, and Will, and Doctrines to the World. And we believe what we know Jeſus hath taught, becauſe we believe he was the *Chriſt* or *Meſſias*.

7. Why

7. Why do you believe, or what hath induced and determined you to believe that Jeſus is the Meſſias? Here I doubt, with many Perſons, the main ſtop would be. But I will ſuppoſe my Friends can anſwer this Queſtion with very good Judgment; tho they might tell me without anſwering in a Circle, and believing as the Collier did, that they believed Jeſus to be the Meſſias, becauſe they believed the forementioned Articles: that is, they underſtood thoſe Articles, and did believe them to be Truths, on other Conſiderations, diſtinct from this, that Jeſus whom now they believe to be the Meſſias had taught them; and that Belief of them did contribute much to induce them to believe that Jeſus was the Meſſias. Here I ſhall only mind my Friends, that that former Belief of theſe Articles, tho joined with the conſequent Belief *that Jeſus is the Meſſias*, is not pretended to be that which made them Chriſtians; but their believing thoſe ſame Articles after another manner, and upon a diſtinct Conſideration, after they did duly believe Jeſus to be the Chriſt, from that or thoſe Conſiderations on which they believed them before, is that which made them Chriſtians: for you could not believe them, becauſe they were taught by Jeſus as the Meſſias, till you did believe him to be the Meſſias, tho you might upon other Conſiderations be induced to believe thoſe Articles to be true. Now if my Friends think they have given very good rational Evidence, from which they may juſtly perſwade themſelves that they are Chriſtians; I muſt tell them, they may be very good Chriſtians, but they have not produced any Proof that they are Chriſtians, according to their own Notion. Indeed if that Propoſition be true,

at

at which upon my laying it down Mr. *Edwards* ſaith they have been ſtaggered, they may this way prove that they are Chriſtians. But if the Belief of all thoſe Articles be abſolutely neceſſary to make them Chriſtians, the preciſe Belief of all of them cannot be ſuch a Proof or Evidence that they are Chriſtians, as we are ſpeaking of: For we ſpeak not of *inward Senſation* (if I may uſe that term) or *Sentiment*, as Monſieur *Claud* and ſome French Authors ſpeak, but of *diſcourſive rational Proof*, and *this as to Matters of Faith*. A Man's believing that Jeſus is the Meſſias, is no Proof that he believes any one of the *particular Doctrines* taught in the Goſpel. But his believing *particular Doctrines* for this *Reaſon*, becauſe *Jeſus* whom he believes to be the *Meſſias*, hath taught them, is a good *Proof* that he does believe that *Jeſus is the Meſſias*. And if the Belief of more Articles than this one, that *Jeſus is the Meſſias*, is abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, it is *utterly impoſſible* that any Man ſhould obtain a *rational*, *diſcourſive*, *argumentative Satisfaction*, that he is *a Chriſtian*, with reſpect to *Matters of Faith*, tho I may ſafely enough extend the *Aſſertion* further. For let a Man believe ever ſo many particular Doctrines, taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, that Belief will prove no more, but that he believes *Jeſus is the Meſſias*. The Belief of thoſe Articles can be no Evidence with reſpect to one another, that is, the Belief of one of thoſe Articles cannot be a Proof that you believe another, tho you do really believe it. Now methinks the *Reſolution* of this *Queſtion*, *What is it that doth make or conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian*, ought to iſſue in *that* into which all the *Evidences* reſpecting (I will ſay) both Faith and Practice,

that

that can be juſtly produced to prove a Man a *Chriſtian*, muſt be *reſolved*; and that is (if I be not much miſtaken) *a Belief that Jeſus is the Meſſias.* But now I return to the latter part of the Anſwer given to my *4th* Queſtion, and with regard to that I would ask my Friends, 8. How do you know that Jeſus Chriſt hath required the Belief of all thoſe Articles you have named, as abſolutely neceſſary to make People Chriſtians? Here you muſt take notice, that it will not ſerve your turn, to ſhew that Jeſus Chriſt hath taught them all, and then ſay that they are therefore to be believed. For the very ſame is to be ſaid of a great many more Points. But you muſt anſwer how you come to be ſatisfied, that Jeſus Chriſt doth require the explicit Belief of every one of thoſe Articles, as neceſſary to make People Chriſtians. If you anſwer, that ſuch and ſuch a learned and godly Man doth ſay ſo: You are to be minded that that Anſwer is feeble, in the preſent caſe; and that you build your Perſwaſion, that you are Chriſtians, on a very *weak bottom.* What will you anſwer when you are told, that other learned and godly Men have inſiſted on certain other Articles (and I could name ſome of no mean Character who have been very earneſt for ſome Points, which I think Jeſus Chriſt hath not taught) as neceſſary to be believed to make Men Chriſtians? If thoſe who inſiſt on ſome other Articles as neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians, be in the right, you are not yet Chriſtians, notwithſtanding you believe all thoſe Articles moſt firmly, which you have named, becauſe there are more or other Articles neceſſarily to be believed to make you Chriſtians. But ſuppoſing all thoſe Articles you have men-

tioned are neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians, I ask you in the laſt place, 9. How do you know that theſe are all the Articles which are neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians? For it is paſt doubt, that Jeſus Chriſt hath revealed and taught many more Articles to be believed. Can you ſhew now, that he hath more expreſly or plainly declared that *this preciſe Number* you inſiſt on, are abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to make People Chriſtians, than he hath that any, or all of the reſt are? If not, who hath *Authority* to *diſtinguiſh* in this *caſe*, where he hath not *diſtinguiſhed*, ſo as to determine *this* and *this Article*, &c. are neceſſarily to be believed to make Men Chriſtians, but *that and the other Article* are not neceſſary, whenas there is the *ſame Authority* for Peoples *believing* the *one* as the *other*, when known?

In the next place, Mr. *Edwards* doth particularly and with Earneſtneſs exhort and entreat me to attend, and apply my ſelf to what he apprehends of great moment to me on this occaſion. I ſhall therefore now more particularly addreſs my ſelf to him. *Reverend Sir*, I receive your *Exhortation* and *Counſel* with a *Gratitude* (as near as I can) *proportioned* to the *Kindneſs* with which you *tender it*; and will endeavour to make a good Uſe of it, depending for Preſervation and Stability in the *Faith of the Goſpel*, on *Jeſus as the Meſſias*. But, *Sir*, it is not the firſt time I have met with an honeſt warm Exhortation that hath had no *Connection* with what has been pretended to be the *Ground* of it. I receive it kindly, conſidered in it ſelf. But, *Sir*, if any Perſons who are not *well-diſpoſed* ſhall happen to read it, and perceiving on how *ſandy a Foundation* it is built, ſhall conclude all your, and perhaps

haps other good Mens *fervent Exhortations* and *pathetick Obteſtations*, are the Effects of *Indiſcretion*, and ſtand upon no better a bottom than this, the Damage would not have been very great if this had been communicated privately, and not committed to publick view. And, Sir, having pondered *John* 6. 67. I am not ſatisfied, that by *going back* there, is meant an unfeigned well-grounded Belief, that *Jeſus was the Chriſt or Meſſias*, and an entertaining the Doctrines and Articles he taught, purely upon his Authority, but the direct contrary: Nor do I ſee any Reaſon to think, that that kind of Faith was the Cauſe of *Judas*'s betraying his Lord, but that *going away*, and *betraying*, was from their want of that ſort of Faith and Chriſtianity.

A Reply to Mr. Edwards's *Reflections on the Animadverſions.*

MR. *Edwards* employs above two Pages here in relating his Gueſſes, and his Reaſons for them, and determines I was not the Author of them; ſo that he is willing to excuſe me from the *crude and ſhallow things offered in them to the Publick*; yet he is *partly of the Mind I was deſired to publiſh them as my own, after they had been tranſmitted to me.* And in another Place, after he is poſitive that I *was not the Compiler of the Animadverſions*, he ſaith (becauſe he apprehended that he had ſomething for his Advantage, with *reſpect* to me) *it is probable I might prick in here and there a fine Flower*; which ſeems to be ſaid for no other Reaſon, but to make way for his bringing in, as he

thought, *ſome finer Flowers of his own.* I will not concern my ſelf about his *Gueſſes*, nor their *Supporters*, any further than by taking notice of the Reaſon he gives, why I was deſired to publiſh the Animadverſions as my own, viz. *That it might be ſaid, that a Man with a Name*, &c. *warranted the late Author of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, &c. To which I have this to ſay, That a much more *Reverend* (Rector) I am ſure I may ſay *DIVINE*, than the *Rector of Steeple*, hath *vouched* that *ſtrange Notion*, for which ſome do decry the *Author of the Reaſonableneſs*, &c. and the *Animadverter*. Nor am I afraid, or aſhamed to ſubſcribe *my Name* to *any one Article* I know that *Reverend Divine* hath taught. That *Reverend Man* had a *Name*, and did with *open Face, and without a Vizour, warrant* the Propoſition laid down by the *Author of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, &c. and contradicted *not in my Sermon*, but in *the Books* the Animadverſions relate to. This *Reverend Perſon* I ſpeak of, was the *moſt Reverend St. John*, who *with open Face, and without a Vizour* hath taught, That *whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God*, 1 John 5. 1. which every one, I ſuppoſe, will acknowledg to be as much as to ſay, *a Chriſtian*. Now if the Belief of more Articles was abſolutely neceſſary to make a Perſon a Chriſtian, let a Man believe *this* with what ſort of Faith ſoever, it could not with Truth be ſaid, that *whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God*. But I am very confident *St. John* knew *as well*, what was *neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian*, as the moſt Reverend Man that hath lived ſince his Days. Thus there was no need that I ſhould be *deſired to publiſh the Animadverſions as my own*, that the *No-*

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tion might come forth with a Name; for it was *openly warranted* by a much *better Name* before.

As for the *unſufferable Blunder* Mr. *Edwards* hath found out in the *Epiſtle to the Reader*, any one who looks upon the *Epiſtle it ſelf*, may perceive the right of that Matter (reading *curſorily* inſtead of *curſory*, as Mr. *Edwards* hath well and truly obſerved) when it is determined whether the word *Treatiſe* doth more properly belong to the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, or to a *ſingle Sermon*: For the Preſs was out no more in printing *that* inſtead of *this*, than it was in the other word Mr. *Edwards* hath been pleaſed to rectify. Mr. *Edwards*'s endeavour to make the Animadverter contradict himſelf, is juſt the ſame with what he did to ſhew I had in my Sermon contradicted the Propoſition I had laid down; and that having been anſwered, there is no need of replying to the Charge, here being no *auxiliary Strength* added to it. But I like his making thoſe Doctrines taught in the New Teſtament, which are not abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to make Men Chriſtians, meer *Conveniencies* here, with reſpect to thoſe who are Chriſtians, no better than I did his making them meerly *Ornamental* in his *Reflections on my Sermon*. There is no one Doctrine taught in the *New Teſtament*, but it is *abſolutely neceſſary* to make up the *entire Body* of that Revelation Chriſt hath committed to his *Church*; yet I am not certain that Mr. *Edwards* will ſay, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to the making of any Man a Chriſtian, that he muſt explicitly know and believe every Doctrine contained in thoſe Writings; for then there will be nothing left for *Conveniency* and *Ornament*.

Mr. *Edwards* ſaith, *it is worth the Reader's obſerving*

that notwithſtanding he had in 12 *Pages together* (viz. *from the* 8th *to the* 20th) *proved that ſeveral Propoſitions are neceſſary to believed in order to our being Chriſtians; yet this ſham-Animadverter attends not to any one of the Particulars which he had mentioned, nor offers any thing againſt them, but only in a lumping way, dooms them all in theſe magiſterial Words, I do not ſee any Proof he produceth*, pag. 21.

Anſw. The matter is truly *thus*; The Animadverter did not take much notice of the *number* of the *Pages*, for if that had been 1200, it had been the ſame thing to him. But he acknowledged *the Places of Scripture* Mr. *Edwards* did quote in thoſe Pages, were full Proof of the Truth and Divine Authority of the Propoſitions contained *in them*, yea he owned that the Knowledg of thoſe Propoſitions might conduce much to diſpoſe People to be Chriſtians. But neither of theſe things was the *Matter in Queſtion*, but this, *viz.* Whether Mr. *Edwards* had proved that *Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles had taught, that the Belief of thoſe Propoſitions was indiſpenſably neceſſary to make Men Chriſtians.* The Animadverter did not affirm that Mr. *Edwards* had not ſaid *he had fully proved* what he had undertaken to prove, *viz.* the Point juſt now mentioned: But it ſeems the Animadverter was ſo *ill natur'd*, he would not take Mr. *Edwards*'s bare word for Proof, but having read thoſe Pages, declared what was the *utmoſt* that Mr. *Edwards*'s Proof did *extend to*, and that he did not ſee any Proof produced in thoſe Pages of this Point. *That Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles had taught, that thoſe Propoſitions muſt neceſſarily be explicitly underſtood and believed to make a Man a Chriſtian*; which was the Point to be proved. Thus he

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delivered his own Senſe, but without the leaſt intimation that *all the World muſt be led* either *by his*, or Mr. *Edwards*'s *Eyes*. He left the Reader to try, whether he could ſee in thoſe Pages any Proof, *that Chriſt and his Apoſtles had taught, that the Belief of thoſe Propoſitions is abſolutely neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian*; and thither I muſt refer the Reader too, to try his Skill, for I cannot ſee any thing like a Proof of that which was the thing to be proved. Now I think an Animadverter deals very fairly, if he takes notice how far what is offered for Proof can reach, and then obſerves what was the preciſe Point to be proved, and leaves the Reader to try whether he can ſtretch what was produced, and make it come up to the very Point that was to be proved.

Then Mr. *Edwards* finds fault with the Animadverter for paſſing over thoſe Pages ſo lightly, where he *evinced this Truth, that the Son of God, and the Meſſias, were not Terms of the very ſame Signification, nay that among the Jews they were not reckoned ſo*; *for the Animadverter ſays no more to all this, but that he did not perceive that Mr.* Edwards *pretended to offer the leaſt Proof that theſe Terms were not ſynonimous Terms in our Saviour's time.*

Anſw. Mr. *Edwards* might have evinced both the Points he names, and yet not have proved that they were not *ſynonimous Terms amongſt the Jews at that time.* I have looked over thoſe Pages Mr. *Edwards* refers to, and if I underſtand him *aright*, he doth hardly allow of any *ſynonimous Terms* in the ſame Language. For all Terms conſidered ſingly in themſelves, do ſtand for diſtinct Ideas. Terms (I conceive) are ſaid to be *ſynonimous*,

nimous, on the account of their being alike applied, to expreſs or ſignify one and the ſame Subject or Thing. And thus, whether the one or the other be made uſe of with reference to that thing, the whole is ſignified by that which is uſed, that would be ſignified if the other were uſed. And when both are uſed together, there is not a *Tautology*, but the latter is brought in by way of *Appoſition*. Thus, tho *Face*, *Ground*, and *Knees*, ſtand for *diſtinct Ideas*, conſidered ſimply in themſelves, yet if theſe Phraſes, *to fall on the Face*, *to fall on the Ground*, &c. were commonly uſed amongſt a People, to ſignify *one certain Poſture*, he that ſhould uſe one of thoſe Phraſes would ſay the very ſame thing as he, or another would, ſhould he or the other expreſs themſelves by one of the other *Phraſes*, notwithſtanding Ground, Face, and Knees, be not the ſame things, neither do thoſe Words ſignify the ſame things amongſt that People, when conſidered ſingly in themſelves. But that the terms *Meſſias*, and *the Son of God*, when applied to *him* whoſe *Titles* they are, were not reckoned amongſt the Jews to be terms of the very ſame Signification, is a Paſſage I cannot find in thoſe 5 or 6 Pages where Mr. *Edwards* ſaith he hath evinced it. That thoſe terms, *Meſſias*, and *the Son of God*, ſimply conſidered, have not the very ſame Signification, is ſo evident, there is no need of a *Text* to prove it. And as for that *Text*, Acts 8. 37. what Mr. *Edwards* doth ſay concerning it, amounts to this, that *if Chriſt and the Son of God are there of the ſame Signification, the Words do ſound thus, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is Chriſt.* But I think they amount to ſomewhat more, *viz.* that Jeſus Chriſt is *The* Chriſt.

Chriſt. It cannot be denied that Jeſus Chriſt is ſometimes uſed in the *New Teſtament as a proper Name*, as in *John* 17. 3. and if it be ſo uſed in *Acts* 8. 37. that Text will not anſwer Mr. *Edwards*'s Deſign. But whether there is ſuch an *abſurd Tautology*, if thoſe Terms be taken in that Text to be of the ſame Signification, as Mr. *Edwards* ſaith there is then, in *that Confeſſion*, I ſhall leave the Reader to judg, when I have ſet down the Account the Author of the *Reaſonableneſs*, &c. doth give of the Senſe of that Text, *p.* 34. *I believe that he whom you call Jeſus Chriſt, is really and truly the Meſſiah that was promiſed.* I acknowledg there were *different Grounds of thoſe two Denominations*, (and ſo I am apt to think there were of all ſynonimous Terms) but when they came to be indifferently uſed, to deſign the ſame Perſon, each of them in its full Latitude comprehended all that the other did, tho when conſidered apart, as to the Grounds and Reaſons of their Application, they had diſtinct and peculiar Significations. The famouſly Learned and Reverend Biſhop *Pierſon* ſaith, that *to be the Chriſt, and to be the Son of God, were by the Jews themſelves accounted equivalent.* Expoſit. on the Creed, *p.* 105. I acknowledg Mr. *Edwards* hath *cloſely urged* what he hath delivered in the Pages he ſpeaks of, but I can no more perceive that he hath at all proved that the Terms ſpoken of were not *ſynonimous Terms* amongſt the Jews in our Saviour's time, than the Animadverter could. And therefore I may ſay that whatever *Olaus Magnus*'s *Gladiator might do, by looking on his Adverſaries Weapons*, it was not poſſible for the Animadverter to *blunt the Edg* of Mr. *Edwards*'s Arguments here, becauſe

cauſe they never had any. There may perhaps be ſome *Keenneſs* in ſome of his Words and *Phraſes*, but as for his other *Weapons* the *Gladiator* himſelf would have loſt his Labour in looking upon them.

Mr. *Edwards* then ſaith, *he had ſecured his Propoſition before he formed his Syllogiſms, and therefore it was not neceſſary to add any further Medium, and to proceed to another Syllogiſm, as the Reader may ſatisfy himſelf.*

Anſw. Let the Reader then ſatisfy himſelf; I will only mind him that the Point Mr. *Edwards* was to prove was this, *That there are other Doctrines beſides this, that Jeſus is the Meſſias, neceſſarily to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian.* The Medium he uſeth to prove this, is, that there are other Doctrines beſides this, *required* (*viz.* by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, for they are their Words he doth alledg to prove that other Doctrines are required) to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian. Now if he hath proved every Propoſition laid down in the Chapter before that in which his Syllogiſms are, to be a Doctrine taught by Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles, that is not the Point; you muſt ſee whether he hath proved *that Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have required the explicit Knowledg and Belief of every one of thoſe Propoſitions to make a Man a Chriſtian.* It is not enough if he hath proved that they have required them to be believed; but the Proof muſt be, that they have required them to be believed particularly for this very purpoſe, *to make a Man a Chriſtian.* And if Mr. *Edwards* hath done that, ſtill his Syllogiſms will be faulty, even according to his own Words. For if the very thing he had been proving

was

was this, that other Propoſitions beſides this, that Jeſus is the Meſſias, are neceſſarily to be known and believed to make a Man a Chriſtian, and had been proving this by the Teſtimony of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, ſhewing that they have required the Belief of more Propoſitions as indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, when he reduced the Sum of his Diſcourſe into Syllogiſms, that very Medium by which he had been proving his Propoſition, ſhould be brought into his Syllogiſms, otherwiſe the Sum of his Diſcourſe could not be there. And *that* is not in either of his Syllogiſms. What he pretends he hath proved is not *this*, that all thoſe things which have immediate Reſpect to the Occaſion, Author, *&c.* of our Salvation, are to be believed; but *this*, *That Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles have required an explicit Knowledg and Belief of all thoſe things which have immediate Reſpect to the Occaſion*; &c. *of our Salvation, as indiſpenſably neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian.* I might alſo obſerve to the Reader, that allowing Mr. *Edwards*'s Syllogiſm to compriſe the Sum of his Diſcourſe, it proves *a great deal too much*; for it proves that *the Belief of all thoſe Propoſitions* he hath laid down in his former Chapter, *is not ſufficient to make a Man a Chriſtian.* For all thoſe who do acknowledg there is not any thing in the New Teſtament but what Jeſus Chriſt hath revealed, cannot deny that every Propoſition in the New Teſtament hath *immediate Reſpect to the Author of our Salvation.* So that by virtue of his Syllogiſm no Man can be a true Chriſtian, till he hath an explicit Belief of every Propoſition that is taught or delivered in the New Teſtament.

Mr:

Mr. *Edwards* reflects on the Animadverter's *Confidence*, and *taking a liberty to aſſert what he pleaſes, becauſe he ſaith there is no Enquiry in the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity concerning Faith ſubjectively conſidered.*

Anſw. I will not retort the Aſperſion. But I muſt ſay, that thoſe are not the Animadverter's Words. He doth take notice that *ſubjective Faith* is ſpoken of in that *Treatiſe*; and ſo it might be, and yet not be the Point that Author did chiefly propoſe to enquire into. Who is ſo fit to ſatisfy us what it was he propos'd to enquire after, as the Author himſelf? who tells us, it was *what God requires us to believe now under the Goſpel*, (*viz.* to make or conſtitute us Chriſtians) *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, &c. *p.* 25. Yet a little before he ſpake of Faith, ſubjectively conſidered. I do not know, neither do I pretend to gueſs what that Author's Judgment is concerning certain particular Doctrines taught in the New Teſtament. He may be as Orthodox in every one of them, for ought I know, as any Man in the World. But this I am certain of, the Accounts he gives occaſionally in this Treatiſe of Faith conſidered ſubjectively, comprehend not only *the Aſſent of the Underſtanding, but the Conſent or Approbation of the Will, and alſo a firm Truſt and Reliance*; which I think is as full an Account of that Faith as Mr. *Edwards* hath given of it. But notwithſtanding that Author hath ſpoken of Faith, conſidered ſubjectively, which the Animadverter did not deny, but expreſly affirmed, as may be ſeen in the Animadverſions, *p.* 32. yet the thing that Author propoſed to enquire after was, *what Articles are required to be believed to make a Man a Chriſtian.*

Chriſtian. Again ſaith Mr. *Edwards*, *How can this Animadverter come off with peremptorily declaring that ſubjective Faith is not enquired into in the Treatiſe of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, when in another Place*, p. 35, 36. *he avers that Chriſtian Faith, and Chriſtianity, conſidered ſubjectively, are the ſame?*

Anſw. The Animadverter doth not any where declare what he is here ſaid to declare, and therefore cannot fairly be charged with declaring it *peremptorily*. But if he had declared it peremptorily, what *Connection* is there betwixt *that* and his averring that Chriſtian Faith and Chriſtianity, conſidered ſubjectively, are the ſame, that it ſhould be thought in that caſe ſo hard a thing for him to *come off*, unleſs he had likewiſe peremptorily declared that the Author of *the Reaſonableneſs* principally deſigned to diſcourſe of Chriſtianity conſidered ſubjectively? Perhaps it will ſtill be ſaid, the Animadverter hath averred that Chriſtian Faith, and Chriſtianity, conſidered ſubjectively, are the ſame. 'Tis true, there are thoſe Words in the Animadverſions. For Mr. *Edwards* having ſaid, that *the Belief of Jeſus's being the Meſſias, was one of the firſt and leading Acts of Chriſtian Faith*; the Animadverter took notice, that Chriſtian Faith in that Propoſition Mr. *Edwards* had laid down, muſt be underſtood ſubjectively, becauſe an Act of Chriſtian Faith cannot be underſtood in any other Senſe, as the Animadverter's Words are, in the Parentheſis Mr. *Edwards* hath been pleas'd to leave out of the Sentence he quotes. So that what the Animadverter ſaid was this, Chriſtian Faith conſidered ſubjectively, and Chriſtianity conſidered ſubjectively,

ly, are the very ſame. Now is not this very true, and conſiſtent enough with his ſaying that the Enquiry the Author of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* propos'd to make, was not concerning Chriſtian Faith conſidered ſubjectively, but objectively? Should another Perſon have publiſhed ſuch *weak and ſorry* Stuff, and have ſuggeſted it as an invincible Difficulty to be got over, peradventure ſome would have ſaid, *One would have thought a Man might be aſhamed to appear in the World with ſuch poor Tackling.*

In the next place, Mr. *Edwards* is much offended, becauſe the Animadverter paſſed over the 4*th* and 8*th* Chapters of his *Socinianiſm unmask'd*, and ſome of his former *Pages*, with a bare Acknowledgment that he was *too dull to perceive any Appearance of Reaſoning in them. In which* (ſaith Mr. *Edwards*) *there is nothing tolerable or excuſable, but this one thing, his Truth and Modeſty*, (by the way, I may take notice that *Truth* and *Modeſty* may paſs for two things with ſome who are not over-fraught with an Opinion of their own innumerable Excellencies; and that it would be no inconſiderable Ornament to ſome Books, if much of either were to be found in them) *in confeſſing himſelf to be dull, which yet the Reader was convinced of before this Acknowledgment.*

Anſw. Poor Animadverter! well worthy to be pitied! who having been at the pains to read over a great many flaunting Pages, to find out ſomething that had at leaſt the Appearance of Reaſon, and finding no ſuch thing, was forc'd at laſt to entertain the Reader with a moſt *obvious Truth*, having the Modeſty to appropriate *that* to himſelf, rather than blame the Author. But why

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ſhould this Omiſſion be ſo *unexcuſable and intolerable?* The Animadverter did not promiſe to reply to every thing Mr. *Edwards* had writ in thoſe Books; and he did take notice of as much as concerned the one Article. If a Man could not modeſtly lay down his Opinion of the abſolute Neceſſity of believing only that Jeſus is the Meſſias to make a Man a Chriſtian, with an intimation that the due Belief of that one Article brought People under an indiſpenſable Obligation to endeavour to know and believe all the other Articles that Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, but immediately an *Under-puller to Racovianiſm*, *Turkiſh Spy*, and twenty more ſuch ſulphureons Eruptions muſt blaze abroad againſt him; what might be expected if thoſe *dainty Strictures* the Animadverter hath paſſed over ſo gently had been brought under a ſevere Examination? One would think an Author were grown very *pettiſh*, if he think himſelf unſufferably affronted, when his Books are touched by a Reader, who hath not ſo much Penetration as to perceive *Reaſon*, where there is *none*. But the Animadverter was not *deciſive* that there was not Reaſon in thoſe Parts of Mr. *Edwards*'s Books; he only acknowledged he did not perceive the Reaſons which might lie hid there, and left the Reader to try his Skill, whether he could find out what had eſcaped him when he look'd over thoſe Pages. Now I have read over thoſe Chapters and Pages the Animadverter paſt over in ſuch an *intolerable and unexcuſable* manner, and can find no more Appearance of Reaſoning in them than he did. But without any Offence to a piece of Mr. *Edwards*'s *one thing*, I may ſay I am not ſo dull but I can perceive in thoſe Chap-

Chapters and Pages a great many empty Flouriſhes, many obvious Miſtakes, and a great many things not conſiſtent with ſtrict Reaſoning. In thoſe Chapters I meet with theſe and ſuch like Sayings, *This great Mufty* (*viz.* the Author of *the Reaſonableneſs*, &c.) *hath given us a hopeful Draught of Chriſtianity; and it was fit the Engliſh Reader ſhould know that a Turk according to him is a Chriſtian, for he makes the ſame Faith ſerve them both. The very Devils are capable of all that Faith which he* (*viz.* the Author of *the Reaſonableneſs*, &c.) *ſaith makes a Chriſtian Man. He* (*viz.* the Author of *the Reaſonableneſs*, &c.) *tells them again and again, that a Chriſtian Man, or Member of Chriſt, need not know or believe any more than that one individual Point which he mentions. Here is an effectual Plot to undermine Stationers-Hall, for all Syſtems and Bodies of Divinity, Philoſophy*, &c. *muſt be caſhier'd: whatever looks like Syſtem muſt not be bought or ſold. This will fall heavy on the Gentlemen of St.* Paul's Church-yard, *and other Places.* If other People can perceive any great *Strength* of *Argumentation* in theſe and many like Paſſages, much Good may their *Sagacity* do them. I may be content they ſhould paſs for *pretty Flowers* to *enchant* the *thoughtleſs*, but I muſt decline *Truth*, if I ſhould ſay, I can take them for *potent Reaſons.*

Mr. *Edwards*, amongſt his other *Findings*, ſeems to have found a piece of *Wit* where nothing but *Truth* was intended. And tho the ſame *Genius* that found out the *Wit* may hide or ſpoil it at pleaſure, the *Country-man's Saying* was as *true* as the *other*, which is as much as I was concerned in. Yet it may be his *Agoniſtick Effort*, to ſpoil the *Wit* he had eſpied, by *jumping* from the *Steeple of a Church*

Church to the *Name of a Pariſh*, will paſs with ſome for no more than a *C—— Pun.*

In the next place Mr. *Edwards* gives a very particular Account whom he underſtands by *Men of Art.* And indeed he hath exceedingly dignified the *Phraſe*, making it *ſynonimous* with other Terms, which properly denote *Perſons* and *Societies*, for which I have a *very profound Veneration.* (I ſee now he is not at utter Defiance with ſynonimous Terms, provided the word *Synonimous* be left out.) I value no Man the leſs for his having had the Happineſs of an *Univerſity Education*, but am very ready to pay unto ſuch all the Reſpect due to the *Characters* they have that way acquired, and to receive from them all the *Inſtruction* my ſhallow Capacity can admit. I have a very great Eſteem for all the *ſober Heads both of our Church, and of thoſe who diſſent from it in the Point of Diſcipline and Ceremonies.* I highly honour *the whole Body of Proteſtant and Reformed Churches abroad as well as at home.* But whether theſe are properly to be called *Artiſts in Religion*, others may determine. I uſe not the *Phraſe* in that Senſe. I would not diſparage any of them to ſuch a degree as I conceive that doth import. No, I abhor the Thought of imputing to them I reverence *ſo much* and *ſo juſtly*, that they ſhould be *Maſters* of the *Trick* of importing and advancing the rate of *Countreband Goods in Religion.* But there are *ſome things* in all the *Parties* I know any thing of, which are not of *Chriſt's Inſtitution*; and there are ſome Perſons in *every Party* who appear to lay more ſtreſs on *thoſe things* than can be juſtified, ſo that they ſeem to appropriate *Chriſtianity* to themſelves, and will very hardly allow others to be

Members of the Church of Chriſt, who come not up to *their Terms*. *Theſe* are the Perſons on *every ſide*, I call the *Men of Art*. And if any have a mind to applaud their being in a *Confederacy on that account*, I do not deſire to enter into their *Secret*. I affect not any divining Denominations and Characters amongſt thoſe who *heartily believe Jeſus to be the Meſſias*, entirely depend on his *Merits*, faithfully ſubmit to his *Authority*, and diligently obſerve his *Laws*. I prefer the Communion of the *Church of England*, for many Reaſons, before any other I know in the World; yet there are ſome things relating to her, which I do not think to be of her *Eſſence*, nor indiſpenſably neceſſary to her *trueſt Advantage and Honour*. I am not ſo fond of ſome of theſe things as many ſome Years paſt appeared to be. My Buſineſs is not to endeavour to draw People to a *Party preciſely* under that *Conſideration*, which imports neither more nor leſs, according to my Apprehenſion, than making them *Sectaries* and *Schiſmaticks*, properly ſo called. I am deſirous to contribute what I can to bring People to be true Chriſtians, who are not ſo, and to further thoſe who are ſo, towards the Knowledg and Belief of all the Doctrines that Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, and in all Godlineſs of Living. And I am ready, according to what Ability I have, to remove *unjuſt Prejudices* and *ill-grounded Scruples*, which any have unhappily imbibed with reſpect to that *Communion*, I think on ſeveral Accounts moſt *eligible*. But I cannot come up to that *Height*, to think that none are *Chriſtians* and *Members of the Church of Chriſt*, who are not in every thing of my *Perſwaſion*. I expreſs my ſelf thus freely,

that

that none may harbour unjuſt Prejudices concerning me, but make what Uſe they pleaſe of what I have ſaid. For I deſire not any of the *temporal Advantages* of the *Church of England*, if any of thoſe things be really of her *Eſſence*, or any way *regularly* conducing to her *trueſt Benefit*, which I think are not ſo.

Mr. *Edwards* and I have declared our Opinions about the Book called *the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, &c. and we differ exceedingly in our Opinions. He ſaith, *he is ſure he hath proved his.* (And in other Places he acquaints his Reader that he *hath fully proved what he hath undertaken againſt that Book.*) I will not ſay any thing peremptorily in the Matter. But I think a *clear plain Proof* will diſcover it ſelf. I confeſs I am apt to ſuſpect a Perſon is ſomewhat *conſcious* that what he offers for Proof hath ſome *Defect*, when he is very importunate with People to take *his Word* for it, that he hath proved the Matter. And if thoſe People Mr. *Edwards* hath *found are more confirmed of late than ever in the Truth of what he hath writ* on this Subject, have obtained their Confirmation this way, I think they are Perſons rather to be pitied for their *Weakneſs*, than to be reckoned Patterns worthy to be imitated.

To conclude, If any Man ſhall produce *plain and clear Proof that Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles have taught that the Belief of any one Article beſides that which we have been diſcourſing of, is abſolutely neceſſary to make or conſtitute a Man a Chriſtian*, I hope I ſhall be as ready to offer my *right Hand* to burn the Sermon, the Animadverſions, and theſe Papers, as any Man in the World ſhall be to *require* it. But Perſons telling me that I *ſcorn Reaſon and*

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Argument, and multiplying ſuch kind of Phraſes, or ſaying with what Aſſurance ſoever that they have *proved*, yea *fully proved* it, will not convince me. As Fines and Impriſonments did not formerly in another caſe, alter my Judgment, (and here by the way I may acquaint thoſe who are ſtill living, and were moſt *eager* and *fierce*, and did *reſent* with an *Exceſs of Paſſion*, my ſuggeſting to them *whoſe Work* they were doing, that if they have not been convinced by the Courſe of Affairs ſince, they may now receive *full Satisfaction* that I was not ſo much miſtaken as they at leaſt in pretence thought I was, if any Credit be due to a certain Book which came to my Hands the latter end of the laſt Week, along with the Papers to which I have been replying, entituled, *The Secret Hiſtory of* Whitehall, *from the Reſtoration of* Charles *II. down to the Abdication*, &c.) I ſay, as *Fines*, *Impriſonments*, and the *predominant Language* of thoſe *Times*, did not alter my Judgment then in another caſe, ſo *Raillery* and *Banter* will not do it in the *preſent Caſe*. If all the *ſoaring Writers* in *Europe* ſhould beſtow their *invidious Epithets* on me, and vent their *fanciful metaphorical Flirts* againſt me on this Account, I think I ſhall ſtand my *Ground*, and paſs the whole over with a *deſerv'd Contempt*.

FINIS.